



BT 990 .W37 1901
Warfield, Benjamin B.
Predestination in the
Reformed Confessions

[EXTRACTED FROM "THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED REVIEW"
FOR JANUARY, 1901.]

PREDESTINATION

IN THE

REFORMED CONFESSIONS

BY

BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD,
PROFESSOR IN PRINCETON SEMINARY.

PHILADELPHIA:
MACCALLA & COMPANY,
1901.

BT
990
.W37
1901

W2313



B. B. Warfield

PREDESTINATION IN THE REFORMED CONFESSIONS.

WHAT we call the Reformation was fundamentally, when looked at from a spiritual point of view, a great revival of religion; when looked at from the theological point of view, a great revival of Augustinianism.* It was the one just because it was the other. Revolting from the domination of ecclesiastical machinery, men found their one haven of rest in the sovereignty of God. The doctrine of Predestination was therefore the central doctrine of the Reformation.† In the Romish system the idea of Predestination has no place, and interest in any opinions that may be held concerning it is in that communion at best but languid. Therefore Perrone, after explaining the difference between the views of the Augustinianizing Thomists and the semi-Pelagianizing Jesuits, can complacently add: "Each school has its own reasons for holding to its opinion: the Church has never wished to compose this controversy: therefore every one may, with safety to the faith, adhere to whichever opinion he is most disposed to and thinks best adapted to solve the difficulties of unbelievers and heretics."‡ The matter was very different with the Reformers. To them the doctrine of Predestination was given directly in their consciousness of dependence as sinners on the free mercy of a saving God: it therefore was part of the content of their deepest religious consciousness. Calvin is historically thoroughly justified in his remark that "no one who wishes to be thought pious will dare to deny *simpliciter* the predestination by which God adopts some into the hope of life and adjudicates others to

* Of course the term is here used of the Augustinian doctrine of grace, and not of the ecclesiastical system which finds its roots also in him.

† Cf. E. F. Karl Müller, *Symbolik.*, p. 75. What are called the formal and material principles of Protestantism belong only to developed Protestantism. The sole doctrine that from the beginning was common to all the Reformers, and that really constituted the formative principle of Protestantism, was that of Predestination. It is really this that Möhler, no less than Schweizer, sees, when he seeks to trace back the contrast between Romanism and Protestantism to the emphasis on the freedom of the human will on the one side and on the sole activity of God on the other.

‡ *Comp. de Deo*, § 411. Yet, one remembers Gottschalk and Jansen.
Reprinted from the Jan., 1901, number of *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review*.

eternal death.”* In very fact, all the Reformers were at one in this doctrine, and on it as a hinge their whole religious consciousness as well as doctrinal teaching turned. The fact is so obvious as to compel recognition even in unsympathetic circles. Thus, for instance, the late Dr. Philip Schaff, though adjusting his language with perhaps superfluous care so as to exhibit his doctrinal disharmony with the Reformers, is yet forced to give explicit recognition to the universal enthusiasm with which they advocated the strictest doctrine of Predestination. “All the Reformers of the sixteenth century,” he says,† “including even the gentle Melanchthon and the compromising Bucer, under a controlling sense of human depravity and saving grace, in extreme antagonism to Pelagianism and self-righteousness, and, as they sincerely believed, in full harmony not only with the greatest of the Fathers but also with the inspired St. Paul, came to the same doctrine of a double predestination which decides the eternal destiny of all men. Nor is it possible to evade this conclusion,” he justly adds, “on the two acknowledged premises of Protestant orthodoxy—namely, the wholesale condemnation of men in Adam, and the limitation of saving grace to the present world.”‡

Scarcely was the Reformation established, however, before the purity of its confession of the Predestination of God began to give way. The first serious blow to it was given by the defection of Melanchthon to a synergistic conception of the saving act. As a result of the consequent controversies, the Lutheran Churches were misled into seeking to define predestination as having sole reference to salvation, denying its obverse of reprobation. “First of all,” says the *Formula of Concord* (1576), “it ought to be most accurately observed that there is a distinction between the foreknowledge and the predestination or eternal election of God. . . . This foreknowledge of God extends both to good and evil men; but nevertheless is not the cause of evil, nor is it the cause of sin. . . . But the predestination or eternal

* *Inst.*, iii, 21, 5.

† *Creeds of Christendom*, i, 451.

‡ We should carefully note here the testimony to the necessary implication of the doctrine of “double predestination” in the evangelical system (in the doctrines of original sin and of the confinement of redemption to this life); and as well to the religious root of the doctrine—a matter of fact which Dr. Schaff repeatedly recognizes as *e. g.*, p. 454. It has become customary in some quarters, however, to represent it as rather a speculative than a religious doctrine. Thus Gooszen discriminates Calvinism properly so-called from what he deems the milder teachings of Bullinger and the Heidelberg Catechism as the intellectualistic-speculative tendency from the soteriological-Biblical tendency: and Calvin is treated in many quarters as the reintroducer of nominalistic speculation into Protestant thought. Nothing could be more mistaken. “This,” says Müller (as cited, p. 481, note 39), pointedly, “is not the language of nominalism but of faith.”

election of God extends only to the good and beloved children of God, and this is the cause of their salvation.”* The grave inconvenience of this construction, of course, speedily had its revenge; and typical Lutheranism rapidly sank to the level of Romish indifference to predestination altogether, and of the Romish explanation of it as *ex prævisa fide*.† Meanwhile the Reformed continued to witness a better profession; partly, no doubt, because of the greater depth of religious life induced in them by the severity of the persecutions they were called upon to undergo; and partly, no doubt, because of the greater height of religious thinking created in them by the example and impulse of their great leader—at once, as even Renan has been compelled to testify, the best Christian of his day and the greatest religious thinker of the modern world. The first really dangerous assault on what had now become distinctively the Reformed doctrine of predestination was delayed till the opening of the seventeenth century. In the meantime, though, no doubt, many individual Reformed thinkers had been more or less affected by a Lutheran environment, as in the lands of German speech, or by Romish remainders, as in England, as well as no doubt by the everywhere present rationalizing spirit which ever lays its stress on man’s autocracy; yet the Reformed Churches had everywhere compacted their faith in numerous creeds, in which the Reformed consciousness had expressed itself on the whole with remarkable purity. These now served as a barrier to the new attacks, and supplied strongholds in which the Reformed consciousness could intrench itself for future influence. The Arminian assault was therefore successfully met. And although, ever since, the evil seed then sown has produced a continuous harvest of doubt and dispute in the Reformed Churches; until to-day—in a new age of syncretism of perhaps unexampled extension—it threatens to eat out all that is distinctive in the Reformed Confessions: nevertheless the Reformed sense of absolute dependence on the God of grace for salvation remains till to-day the dominant element in the thought of the Reformed Churches, and its theological expression in the complete doctrine of *prædestinatio duplex* retains its place in the hearts as well as in the creeds of a multitude of Reformed Christians throughout the world.

The numerous Reformed creeds, representing the convictions of Christian men of very diverse races during a period of a century and a half (1523–1675), while on the whole falling behind the works of the great dogmatitians in the ability and fullness with

* Article XI.

† This result is reached as early as Hutter (1610), in whose *Compendium* it is baldly taught that God has elected men *respectu prævisæ fidei*.

which they set forth the Reformed system,* nevertheless form a very remarkable series of documents when looked at as the consistent embodiment of such a doctrine as the Reformed doctrine of predestination. For their own sakes, and for the sake of the great doctrine which they so persistently maintained in the face of so many disintegrating influences and such determined assaults, they are well worth our study. And this primary impulse to turn to them is powerfully reënforced in our own day by the circumstance that recent appeals to them seem to suggest that they have been but little investigated by the men of our generation; so that their message to us is in danger of being widely misapprehended, and sometimes, it must be confessed, even seriously misrepresented. There is a certain timeliness, therefore, as well as inherent propriety in, at this juncture, drawing out from the Reformed creeds their teaching as to predestination, and noting the essential harmony in their presentation of this great doctrine. Assuredly by such a survey the doctrine will be more deeply rooted in our thinking and love. It is possible that we may incidentally learn how to esteem the teaching on this great subject of what may well be spoken of as the consummate flower of the Reformed symbols—that Westminster Confession which it has been our happiness as Presbyterians to inherit. And along with this, we may perhaps also learn what estimate to place on the attempts which are now making more or less to eliminate from that Confession its testimony to this great central Reformed doctrine.

It will probably not be deemed impertinent if we prefix to the extracts taken from the Confessions a brief running account of the documents and their general attitude to the subject under discussion, such as may serve as a kind of introduction to reading intelligently their own words.

I.

The Reformed Confessions begin, of course, with the symbolical writings of Zwingli and his Swiss coadjutors, and pass thence to those produced by Calvin and his pupils, and so on to the later documents, the work of the Reformed theologians of the latter part of the sixteenth and of the seventeenth centuries.

Zwingli himself produced four works of this character. These are the Sixty-seven Articles or Conclusions of Zurich (1523), the Ten Bernese Theses (1528), the System of Faith (*Fidei Ratio*),

* Cf. Schweizer, *Glaubenslehre der Evang.-ref. Kirche*, § 15, (I, p. 84). So of the relation of creeds and theologians in general, Dean Stanley, *Contemporary Review*, Aug., 1874, p. 499. The Canons of Dort, the Westminster Confession, and the *Formula Consensus Helvetica* form exceptions in this regard.

prepared to be presented at the Diet of Augsburg (1530), and the Exposition of the Christian Faith, addressed to Francis I, and published by Bullinger after Zwingli's death (1531). These present the Reformed faith in the first stage of its affirmation. The former two contain, indeed, only the simplest and briefest assertion of the primary elements of Protestant practice in opposition to the most prominent evils of the Romish Church: the latter two are more elaborate expositions of the Protestant belief, but are essentially of an apologetic order. No one of these documents treats professedly of predestination or election, though of course they all rest on the convictions in these matters that characterized Zwingli's thought, and in the two more elaborate documents allusions to them naturally appear. These are more direct and full in the *Fidei Ratio*, and occur in it in connection with the treatment of the Fall, Redemption and especially of the Church—about which last topic the controversy with Rome of course especially raged. In the *Expositio Fidei Christianæ* they occur most pointedly in connection with the treatment of Good Works. In mass they are not copious, but they constitute a very clear and a tolerably full outline of the Reformed doctrine on the subject. [God, we are told, has freely made appointment concerning all things, and that by a decree which is eternal and independent of all that is outside of Himself: in this decree is included the fall of man along with all else that comes to pass: and, as well, the election in Christ of some—whom He will—to eternal life; these constitute His Church, properly so called, known certainly from all eternity by Him, but becoming known to themselves as God's elect only through the witness of the Spirit in due time in their hearts, and the testimony of their good works which are the product and not the foreseen occasion of their election; and by these only are they differentiated in the external Church from the reprobates who with them may be included in its bounds.]

Meanwhile the Reformation was spreading to other localities, and in proportion as the same need was felt for an expression of the principles of the new faith which had produced the Zwinglian articles, similar articles were being elsewhere produced. The so-called Tetrapolitan Confession of 1530 owed its origin, indeed, rather to a specific demand—to the need of a witness to the faith of the four imperial cities to be presented, like Zwingli's *Fidei Ratio*, at the Diet of Augsburg; and its form and general contents were determined by the desire of its authors (Bucer, with the aid of Capito and Hedio) to assimilate the expression of their faith to the Lutheran Confession presented at that Diet. It contains no separate section on predestination, nor, indeed, does it anywhere make any

clear allusion to it, though the conceptions on this matter animating the Reformed Churches seem to underlie the sections on Justification and Good Works. Very similar were the circumstances in which the Bohemian Confessions (1535 and 1575) were framed: and the results are much the same. The earliest Basle Confession, prepared by Oecolampadius and Myconius (1534), on the other hand, besides asserting the universal government of God, gives a brief paragraph in its exposition of the doctrine of God to the subject of predestination: this affirms simply that "God before He had created the world had elected all those to whom he would give eternal salvation"—a sentence worthy of our note chiefly because it is the earliest instance in the Reformed Confessions of a separate paragraph devoted to this great subject.* What is known as the Second Basle, or more properly as the First Helvetic, Confession, prepared in 1536, under the unionistic influences of the Strasburg Reformers (Bucer and Capito), and in anticipation of a General Council—and therefore under much the same conditions that gave birth to the Tetrapolitan Confession—like that document omits all direct reference to the subject of predestination. The Confessions of Poland (1570), and Hungary, prepared under much the same conditions, exhibit much the same sparingness of speech on the subject. Of these only the Hungarian (1537–1558) adverts to it at all, and that most explicitly only to defend God against the charge of "respect of persons." Even so, however, it tells us that all things are eternally disposed by God; and that God's election is eternal, entirely gratuitous, and therefore freely disposed according only to His own will; and that it leaves aside vessels of wrath to the endless doom justly due to their sins.

As the Reformed consciousness took firmer form in the passage of time, however, this tendency to pass lightly over the subject naturally passed more and more away. Something of the early apologetical tone in dealing with predestination doubtless still clings to the Second Helvetic Confession, which was composed by Bullinger in 1562 for his own private use, and on its publication in 1566 was rapidly very widely adopted throughout the Reformed world. Winer† certainly goes too far when he affirms that its presentation of predestination is so remarkable a "softening of the dogma" that "this Confession might be placed on the borderland of Predestinarianism." It is much more accurate to say with Müller that the Reformed doctrine

* A separate *paragraph*, not article: it appears as a distinct paragraph under the general caption "Of God." The Latin translation in ordinary use erects it into a separate "Disputation"—the Third.

† *Comparative View, etc.*, E. T., p. 168.

is set forth here very clearly in its peculiarity, but with an effort to avoid giving offense : and that it is dominated not so much by doctrinal obscurity as by an ethical-practical intent.* The doctrine is here at length : and it is carefully and soundly stated : but there is, no doubt, apparent in its whole treatment a certain defensive attitude which seems more intent to guard it from attack than to bring out all its content with clearness and force. God is said to have determined its end to every creature and to have ordained along with the end at the same time the means by which it shall be attained. He is certainly not the author of sin, with which He is connected only as permitting it for high ends, when He could have prevented it if He had so chosen, and thus as utilizing it in the execution of His plans. His providence is accordingly over all, though nothing finds its evil in His providence. The predestination of His saints to be saved in Christ is eternal, particular, on the ground of no foreseen merit, and assured of its end : and the election of saints to life implies the desertion of a body of reprobates. Who is elect is only *à posteriori* discoverable through men's relation to Christ ; we are to judge of others in this matter with charity and are to hope well of all, numbering none rashly among the reprobates : of our own election and therefore certain salvation we may, on the other hand, be assured if we know ourselves to be in Christ and bear fruitage in a holy life. The whole substance of the doctrine clearly is here, though the stress is laid continually on its aspects as seen *sub specie temporis* rather than *æternitatis*.

The case is little different with the Heidelberg Catechism, which doubtless owes it only to its purpose as a document meant as practical milk for babes more than theological meat for mature Christians, that it has very little directly to say about so high a mystery. It is nevertheless pervaded from beginning to end with an underlying presupposition of it, and hints of the doctrine emerge oftener than is always recognized, and that both in its general and special aspects. These hints once or twice rise to explicit assertions, and when they do they leave nothing to be desired in the way of sharpness of conception. It is naturally under the doctrine of providence that general predestination is most clearly alluded to : the Eternal Father is said to uphold and govern the universe " by His eternal counsel and providence," and that effectively for His ends—" so governing all creatures that all things come not by chance but by His Fatherly hand " (Ques. 26, 27). Special predestination, equa ly naturally, is most directly adduced in connection with the doctrine of the Church

* *Op. cit.*, p. 407.

(Ques. 54): we are to believe concerning the Church "that out of the whole human race, the Son of God, by His Spirit and word, gathers into the unity of true faith, defends and preserves for Himself a communion elected to eternal life:" and further, each of us is to believe "that He is and shall ever remain a living member of the same." Here the facts of election and perseverance are explicitly asserted. Elsewhere we are taught that our comfort in looking for the coming of Christ the Lord is derived from the fact that He will "cast all His and our enemies into eternal damnation, and will take us together with all the elect to Himself into heavenly joy and glory" (Ques. 52); and similar comforting allusions to election are found elsewhere (Ques. 1, 31).

Among later documents something of the circumspection which was the natural product in the first age of unionistic efforts on the one hand, and of desire to shield the infant Churches from powerful enemies on the other, appears again in a somewhat different form in what are usually called the Brandenburg Confessions. These are the Confession of Sigismund (1614), the Leipzig Colloquy (1631), and above all the Declaration of Thorn (1645). These are historically especially interesting as exhibiting the general firmness with which on the whole the Reformed held to and asserted the essentials of their doctrine in the most untoward circumstances. The Confession of Sigismund (1614) is a purely personal statement of the Elector's faith, published on his conversion from the Lutheranism in which he had been bred. He explicitly confesses, under a sense of its great importance—as the basis on which rest "not only all the other Articles, but also our salvation" itself—the eternal and gratuitous election of God—the eternal ordination of His chosen ones, without respect to worthiness, merit or works in them, to everlasting life and all the means thereto: as also the corresponding fact of an eternal preterition of the rest and their preparation for the punishment which is their due. Great stress is laid on the justice of the judgment of God in reprobation, and there is perhaps some failure in nice discrimination between what is known among theologians as "negative" and "positive" reprobation: the interest of Sigismund turning rather on vindicating God from the reproach of taking pleasure in the death of sinners and claiming for Him a universal love for the world. The statement of the Reformed doctrine at the Leipzig Colloquy (1631) was for the avowed purpose of establishing as near an agreement with Lutheran modes of statement as could be attained without the surrender of essential truth, and the forms of statement are naturally deeply colored by this unionistic purpose. Nevertheless the entire substance of the doctrine is fairly pre-

served. A free, eternal election of not all but some men, particularly designed, on the ground of nothing foreseen in them, to the sole reception of the efficacious means of grace is asserted: and along with it, the corresponding eternal reprobation of the rest. Great care is taken to free God from constructive blame for the death of the wicked, and in the language in which this is done there is perhaps, as in the Confession of Sigismund, an insufficient discrimination between negative and positive reprobation.

By far the most interesting of the three Brandenburg statements, however, is the Declaration presented at the Colloquy of Thorn (1645). Here many of the conditions which accompanied the statement of Protestant belief at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530 were substantially reproduced. Reformed doctrine was above all things to be so set forth as to attach itself to whatever latent elements of the truth might be discoverable in Romish thought. The chief points of difference from the earlier situation are due to the later date and changed times; at this period the Reformed had not only come to full consciousness of their faith, but had tasted its preciousness in times of persecution and strife. It is interesting to observe the means taken in these circumstances to commend the Reformed doctrine to Romish sympathy. Briefly they consisted in setting it forth as simply "Augustinianism." No separate caption is devoted to Predestination or to Election. All that is said on these topics is subsumed quite Augustine-wise under the caption *De Gratia*. This caption is developed in eight calmly written paragraphs which, beginning with redemption of the helpless sinner through the sole grace of God in Christ, carries him through the stages of the *ordo salutis*—effectual calling, justification, sanctification, perseverance, final reward—all of the pure grace of God—to end in the reference of all to God's eternal purpose in election. This is followed by eighteen further paragraphs in which the whole doctrine of grace, as before positively developed, is guarded from misapprehension, and defense is offered against calumnies. Only the two last of these paragraphs concern the doctrine of election. The whole is closed with a direct appeal to Augustine and a challenge to the followers of Thomas Aquinas to recognize the Reformed doctrine as none other than that taught them by their Master.

The Thoruniensian theologians thus put themselves forward distinctly as "Augustinians" and asked to be judged as such. It is nevertheless in substance a very thoroughly developed Reformed doctrine that they express under this "Augustinian" form. In their fundamental statement they refer all of God's saving activities to His eternal election as their source; deny that

it itself rests on anything foreseen in its object, and derive it from mere and undeserved grace alone ; and connect with it the ordination of all the means by which the predestined salvation is attained : nor do they shrink from explicitly placing over against it the preterition of the rest. In the additional paragraphs the sure issue of election in eternal life is renewedly insisted on (11), as well as the origin of the election in mere grace (17), and the fixedness of the number of the elect (17). On the other hand, some subtlety is expended in the closing paragraph on the exposition of the relation of the eternal decrees of election and reprobation to the actual character of men. It is denied that these decrees are "absolute" in the sense that they are "without any respect to faith and unbelief, to good and evil works." It is denied also, however, that faith and good works are the cause or reason of election, and doubtless by implication (though this is not said in so many words) that unbelief and sin are the cause or reason of the involved preterition. What is affirmed is that faith and good works are foreseen in the elect as "means of salvation foreordained in them by God." And that "not only original sin, but also, so far as adults are concerned, unbelief and contumacious impenitence, are not properly speaking foreordained of God, but foreseen and permitted in the reprobates themselves as the cause of desertion and damnation, and reprobated by the justest of judgments." The natural meaning of this language yields a sound Reformed sense. So far as it concerns the elect, indeed, none other is capable of being drawn from it. There is an unfortunately ambiguous use of language, however, with reference to the reprobates—as, indeed, even in the use made of the technical term "*decretum absolutum*"—that may easily mislead, and that the reader finds himself fearing was intentionally adopted to wrap the Reformed doctrine at this point so far in a cloud. There can be indeed no other meaning attributed to the denial that unbelief and impenitence in the reprobate are "properly foreordained ;" seeing that in the Reformed conception, fully shared by these theologians, God has foreordained all that comes to pass : and while no Reformed theologian would doubt that their own unbelief and impenitence are the "meritorious cause of the desertion and damnation" of the reprobate, yet the ambiguity of the language that follows—"and are reprobated by the justest of judgments"—certainly opens the way to some misconception. The suspicion can scarcely be avoided that the Thoruniensian theologians purposely used language here capable of a double sense. While naturally suggesting an interpretation consonant with sovereign preterition (negative reprobation), it is liable to be

misread as if allowing that negative reprobation itself (preterition) found a meritorious cause in men's sins, which themselves lay wholly outside the foreordination (decree) of God.

It is worthy of note that in the midst of this gingerly treatment of the matter of reprobation, these theologians yet manage to let fall a phrase in passing which betrays their Declaration into an extremity of doctrine at another point to which no other formally framed Reformed Confession commits itself.* The Declaration of Thorn in effect is the only formal Reformed Confession which asserts or implies that some of those who die in infancy are reprobated. This it does by the insertion into the clause dealing with this topic of the words "so far as adults are concerned." In "reprobation" (whatever that means with them—whether both "negative" and "positive" reprobation, or only the latter—makes no difference in the present matter), they say, God acts on the foresight not only of original sin, "but also, *so far as adults are concerned*, of unbelief," etc. God then "reprobates" not only adults on account of their sins, original and actual, but also infants on account of original sin alone. It is exceedingly interesting to observe a body of over-cautious men thus so intent on avoiding Scylla as to run straight into Charybdis. The reason, however, is not far to seek. They were primarily intent on vindicating themselves as "Augustinians" in the forum of the Romish judgment: they wished, that is, to appeal to the sympathies of the professed followers of Augustine in the Roman communion:† while excessively careful, therefore, with respect to the whole matter of the *prædestinatio duplex* they felt no reason, as professed children of the *durus pater infantum*, to fear with respect to the fate of infants. The circumstances in which the Declaration was

* The only other exception is, indeed, the *Consensus Genevensis*, which is in form a polemic defense by Calvin of his doctrine of predestination against the assaults of Pighius and Georgius Siculus. In it we read (Niemeyer, p. 263): "If neither original sin suffices for Pighius for the condemnation of man, nor any place is given to the secret judgment of God, what will he do with regard to infant children who have been taken from this life before they could perform any such work (of charity), on account of their age? The circumstance of birth and death was certainly the same for infants who died at Sodom and at Jerusalem, nor was there any difference in their works; why will Christ at the last day segregate from some that stand at His right hand, others at His left? Who does not adore here the wonderful judgment of God, which has brought it about that some should be born at Jerusalem whence they might soon pass to a better life, while it separated others to be born at Sodom the gate of hell?" (Cf., p. 287.)

† The Augustinianism of Augustine is of course a different matter from that of the Romish "Augustinians." The *prædestinatio duplex* and the distinction between the two wills in God are both explicitly taught by Augustine. If it had been to Augustine himself that the Thoruniensian divines were appealing, their *finesse* here would have been unnecessary.

formed, in other words, is responsible for its weaknesses in both directions. Another instance of the ambiguous use of language in the interests of their desire to come forward as simply followers of Augustine is afforded by their treatment of "perseverance" (11): in this they oddly interchange the terms "justified," "regenerate," "elect." It can scarcely be thought that they really meant to teach that the justified may "fall from grace," or that the "regenerate" are different from "the elect,"—their concatenation of the "golden chain" of salvation in their fundamental statement of faith forbids that: but it is obvious that their language here is open to that misinterpretation, and we fear it must be judged that it was intended to be so in deference to current "Augustinian" modes of expression in this matter. The similar obscuration of the distinction between the *voluntas beneplaciti* and *voluntas signi* (6) has its cause in the same effort. The Declaration of Thorn, in a word, while it approves itself as a soundly Reformed document, has been drawn up with an occasional over-subtle use of language which seems intended to obscure the truth that its authors nevertheless flattered themselves was expressed: and which is therefore liable to obscure it—to other readers than those whose eyes it was first intended to blind.

The Confessions which we have thus passed in review include, it will doubtless have been observed, especially German ones. Their peculiarities, however, have no national root: they are due rather to the fact, on the one hand, that this group of Confessions embraces the earliest, tentative efforts at creed-making in the Reformed Churches, and, on the other, that the circumstances in which the German Reformed Churches were placed made them the especial prey of unionistic efforts and apologetical temptations. It is scarcely fair to expect of documents framed, as the most of the documents of this class were, expressly to commend themselves to those of other faiths, quite the same sharpness of outline that might well be looked for elsewhere. Taken as a whole and judged from the point of view of the circumstances of their origin, this is an excellent body of Reformed documents, surprisingly true to the faith of the Reformed Churches: it is, after all, rather in language than in substance that they create difficulties. Meanwhile, however, there were other Reformed Confessions being framed under other stars, and in them the Reformed conceptions came, speaking generally of them as a class, to purer because less embarrassed expression. This series begins with the Confessional writings of John Calvin. It is not to be inferred, however, either that Calvin's teaching exercised no influ-

ence on the matter or phrasing of the Confessions already adduced, or that it introduced into the Reformed Churches any new attitude toward the doctrine of predestination. On the contrary, the commanding influence of Calvin penetrated to every corner of the Reformed Churches, and is traceable in all the credal statements framed subsequently to his appearance at Geneva. And, on the other hand, in his doctrine of predestination he proclaimed nothing not common to all the Reformed leaders. [So far from advancing in it beyond the teaching of Zwingli, Zwingli's modes of expression on this high mystery seemed rather to Calvin extreme and paradoxical, if not even lacking in discretion.*] So closely do his modes of expression regarding it resemble those of Bucer that the latest student of his doctrine of predestination† is inclined to believe that he derived it from Bucer. Even Bullinger, through whatever pathway of doubt and hesitation, came ultimately to full agreement with him.‡ Indeed, his doctrine of predestination was so little a peculiarity of Calvin's that it was originally, as we have seen, not even a specialty of the Reformed, but rather constituted the very hinge of the Reformation: and it was Luther and Melanchthon and Bucer and Peter Martyr who first put it forward as the determining element in the Reformation platform. What is due to Calvin is, at most, only the final establishment of the clear, cogent and consistent expression of it in the Reformed creeds. His systematic genius (perceived from the first) its central importance to the system of truth on which the Reformation was based; and he grasped it with such full and clear apprehension, that in his own writings and wherever his influence dominated it was no longer easily possible to falter either in its apprehension or its statement, and efforts to speak softly regarding it or to pare it down to fit the desires of men measurably ceased. It is on this account only that in the Confessions that derive most directly from Calvin we see the whole Reformed doctrine of predestination come most fully and consistently to its rights.

Calvin was himself the author of a considerable number of documents of symbolical character: and although the place given in them to the doctrine of predestination varies widely according to the circumstances of each case, the doctrine embodied in those which

* "Zwingli's little book [*On Providence*] is so full of hard paradoxes that it is as far as possible removed from that moderation which I have employed."—Calvin to Bullinger in *Opp. Calv.*, xiv, 253.

† Scheibe: *Calvin's Predestinationlehre*.

‡ See *Herzog-Encyc.*, 3d ed., iii, 545-6, where the development, or perhaps we would better say, the librations of Bullinger's doctrine are briefly sketched. Even in the *Decades*, however, Bullinger clearly defines predestination as *duplex*, or, as it is more accurately phrased, *gemina* (*Parker Soc. ed.*, iv, 4, p. 185, 186; cf. iv, 33-4).

give it any full expression appears in a singularly pure form. Even the first edition of the *Institutes*, published in 1536, might fairly be so far counted among the symbolical books as its publication was determined by apologetic need, and its primary purpose was to testify to the world what the faith of the French Protestants really was. In it no separate treatment was accorded to predestination and what is said on this topic emerges only incidentally, very much as in Zwingli's *System of Faith*, and as in that document also most fully in connection with the doctrine of the Church. But this incidental treatment is full enough to show that there was already present to Calvin's mind all the substance of the doctrine as elsewhere developed by him. His first formal exposition of it, under its own separate caption, occurs, however, not in the *Institutes*, but in the earliest of his formal symbolical writings, the *Instruction and Confession of Faith in Use in the Church of Geneva*, published in April, 1537. In this document the whole of Calvin's doctrine of predestination is set forth in clear if succinct outline. The starting-point is taken in the observed actual separation of mankind into the two classes of the saved and lost. This distinction is carried back at once to the secret eternal counsel of God, in which some are predestinated to be His children and heirs of the heavenly kingdom, while others are left to the just punishment of their sins. The reason why God has so discriminated between men is declared to be inscrutable by mortals, and men are dissuaded from prying into it: it is enough for us, we are told, to know that His action here, too, is holy and just, and therefore redounds to His praise. For the rest, it is for us to seek the certitude of our faith in the contemplation, not of election but of Christ, whom having we have all. On quite similar lines runs the much more meagre teaching of the *Genevan Catechism* of 1645, in which there occur no separate questions and answers consecrated specifically to predestination, but only incidental allusions to the subject in the answers given under the topics of providence and the Church. God, it is taught, is the Lord and governor of all things, "to whose empire all things are subject and whose nod they obey"—even the devil and godless men, all of whom are the ministers of His will, and are compelled even against their plans "to execute what has seemed good to Him." The Church, it is taught, is "the body and society of believers whom the Lord has predestinated to eternal life," all of whom, therefore, because elected of God, He justifies and sanctifies and will glorify. In similar fashion even the *Consensus Tigurinus* of 1549, which concerns itself formally with nothing but the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, alludes, nevertheless, to

election—teaching that it is only to the elect that the sacraments actually convey grace—“for,” it continues, “just as God enlightens unto faith no others than those whom He has foreordained to life, so by the hidden power of His Spirit He brings it about that the elect receive what is offered in the sacraments.”

It is however, of course, chiefly in the *Genevan Consensus*, called out in 1552 by the attacks on the doctrine of predestination made by Bolsec, that we find the fullest statement of Calvin's doctrine of predestination which has a claim to symbolical authority. This document is not in form a Confession, but is rather a polemical treatise written in Calvin's own name and given symbolical significance only by its publication in the name of the pastors of Geneva as a fair exposition of the Genevan doctrine. It is wholly devoted to the defense of Calvin's teaching on predestination, and bears the significant title: “Of the eternal predestination of God by which out of men He has elected some to salvation and left others to their destruction,”—in which, as we perceive, the *prædestinatio gemina* is made the very core of the doctrine. One needs to read but a little way into the treatise to perceive how strongly and indeed even passionately Calvin insisted upon this point. The reason for this is that he looked upon election not merely as the warrant for assurance of faith, but especially as the support and stay of the alone-efficiency of God in salvation: and that he perceived, with the clearness of vision eminently characteristic of his genius, that for the protection of monergistic salvation and the exclusion of the evil leaven of synergism, the assertion of the *prædestinatio gemina* is absolutely essential. In this we see accordingly the real key to the insistence on “sovereign reprobation” in the Calvinian formularies: the conviction had become a part of the very substance of Calvin's thought that “election itself unless opposed to reprobation will not stand”—that “the discriminating grace of God” was virtually set aside as the alone cause of salvation if it were not confessed that the segregation of some to receive the just award of their sins is as truly grounded in His holy will as salvation itself in His will of grace. The extended discussion and even the polemic form of this treatise enabled Calvin powerfully to commend his doctrine to every reader, and to fortify it by full expositions of Scripture: and doubtless it is to the influence of the *Consensus of Geneva* that much of the consistency with which the *locus* on predestination was treated in subsequent Calvinistic formularies is traceable.* The very qualities

* Compare an interesting instance of its influence in that direction in the letter of Bartholomew Traheron to Bullinger, *Zurich Letters*, First Series, i, 325, cf. 327 (cf. Schaff: *Creeds, etc.*, i, 630, 631).

which gave it its great influence, however, render it difficult to extract it briefly, and we may account ourselves fortunate that we have, through a discovery by the Brunswick editors of a brief series of "articles on predestination" in Calvin's hand, a succinct statement from himself of his whole doctrine, to which, though we have no evidence that they were ever given symbolical authority, we may fairly go as to a summary of his teaching. In these he affirms that God did not create man without having previously determined upon his destiny; that therefore the fall was included in God's eternal decree; and with it, the discrimination between the elect and reprobate portions of fallen mankind; which discrimination has no other cause than God's mere will: and therefore the choice of the elect cannot rest on foreseen faith, which is rather the gift of God in the execution of His decree of salvation, granted therefore to the elect and withheld from the reprobate: as is also the gift of Christ. Rising next to the general decree, he affirms that the will of God is the first and supreme cause of all things, and yet God is not in any sense the author of sin, which is offensive to Him and will receive His punishment, though He certainly makes use of all sinners too in executing His holy purposes.

There is also a series of Confessions from Calvin's hand in which a somewhat less prominent place and thorough statement are given to predestination, though certainly there is no faltering in the conception of it which is suggested when it is alluded to. Among these would be numbered the earliest Confession of the Genevan Church (1536), if we could attribute it in whole or in part to Calvin: it is ordinarily, however, and apparently justly, assigned to Farel. In it there is no separate treatment accorded to predestination, but the keynote of Calvin's theology is firmly struck in the attribution of all good in man to the grace of God—in the acknowledgment and confession that "all our blessings are received from the mercy of God alone, without any consideration of worthiness in us or merit of our works—for to them is due no return except eternal confusion." There is here presented in a single clause the entire premise on which rests Calvin's *prædestinatio gemina*. A Confession put by Calvin into the mouths of the students of Geneva, dating from 1559, may, however, be properly taken as a typical instance of this class. It is naturally reminiscent of the Genevan Catechism of 1645. Stress is laid in it on the divine government of the invisible spirits—whose differing fates are traced back to the divine appointment, and whose entire conduct is kept under the divine control, for the working out of His ends. In regard to special predestination emphasis is thrown on the divine origin of faith, which is con-

fessed to be "a special gift, which is not communicated save to the elect, who have been predestinated before the creation of the world to the inheritance of salvation without any respect to their worthiness or virtue." To the same class belong also the three Confessions which Calvin prepared for the French Churches. The earliest and shortest of these is that which he seems to have drawn up in 1557 for the Church at Paris in vindication of itself against the calumnies that had been brought against it. In this there is only a brief confession that it is "of the mercy of God alone that the elect are delivered from the common perdition," and that the faith by which alone we are saved is itself a free and special gift granted by God to those to whom it seems good to Him to give it, and conveyed to them by the secret grace of the Holy Spirit. The Confession which he wrote to be presented in the name of the French Churches to Maximilian and the German Diet of 1562 is only a little more explicit. In this man's entire dependence on the undeserved mercy of God for salvation—offering no plea to God except his misery—is adverted to, and it is then affirmed that therefore the goodness of God displayed to us proceeds solely from His eternal election of us according to His sovereign good pleasure: comfort is found in this display of the Divine goodness, but the fanaticism is repelled that we may rest on our election in such sort that we may neglect the means.

The third of the French Confessions drafted by Calvin after enlargement at the Synod of Paris, 1559, became the national Confession of the French Reformed Churches, and is therefore of far more significance than its predecessors. It is also somewhat fuller than they are, though following much the same line of thought. It confesses with all Calvin's clearness the universal Lordship of God and His admirable mode of serving Himself with devils and evil men, without the least participation in their evil: it draws the Christian man's comfort from the assurance of the sure protection of God over his people: it describes election as the eternal, immutable decree of God, proceeding on no foresight of works, by which He has determined to withdraw His chosen ones from the universal corruption and condemnation in which all men are plunged—"leaving," it is significantly added, "the rest in this same corruption and condemnation, to manifest in them His justice, as in the former He makes the riches of His mercy to shine forth." Of quite similar character to the Gallican Confession is the Belgic Confession (1569), the composition of the martyr hand of Guido de Brès, but in the section (xvi) on election somewhat revised by Francis Junius. In its statement of general predestination, indeed (xiii), even the language recalls that of the French Confes-

sion, whose statement it may be said only to repeat in an enriched form. The article on election, on the other hand, is somewhat less full than that in the Gallican Confession, but teaches the same type of doctrine : it is essentially an assertion of the *prædestinatio bipartita* as a manifestation at once of the divine mercy and justice.

Meanwhile across the Channel also the same influences were working. In England from 1536, when the Ten Articles—essentially Romish in contents—were published, the Reforming party were slowly working their way to a better faith, until, having at length found themselves, they published the Forty-two Edwardian Articles in 1553 ; of these the Elizabethan Thirty-nine Articles (1563–1571) are merely a slight revision, and in the article on Predestination a simple repetition. These “Articles of the Church of England” were prepared by a commission under the headship of Cranmer, to whom the chief share in their authorship seems to belong: but in the seventeenth Article, on Predestination, the influence of Peter Martyr seems distinctly traceable, and, whoever may have drawn it up, it may fairly be attributed in its substance ultimately to him. It confines itself to a statement of the gracious side of predestination—“predestination to life”—and it consists of two parts, in the former of which “predestination to life” is defined, and in the latter of which the use of the doctrine is expounded. The definition of “predestination to life” is made to rest on an “election” here assumed as having antecedently taken place; and to include God’s eternal and “constant” (*i. e.*, unchangeable) counsel, secret to us, negatively to deliver His elect from curse and damnation, and positively to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation. The stress is therefore laid precisely on the doctrine of “perseverance,” and the surety of the whole *ordo salutis* for those so predestinated is adduced in detail in support of its general assertion. The definition is remarkable not so much for what it asserts as for what it omits, and in what it omits not so much for what it rejects as for what, though omitting, it presupposes. The exposition of the proper use of the doctrine includes a description of its effect in establishing and confirming the faith of those who use it in a godly manner, and a warning against its abuse by the carnal and merely curious; the whole closing with an exhortation quite in Calvin’s manner to make the revealed rather than the secret will of God our guide to life. The whole is not only soundly Reformed but distinctly Calvinian in substance : but its peculiar method of dealing with the more fundamental aspects of the doctrine by way of allusion, as to things fully understood and presupposed, lays it

especially open to misunderstandings and wrestlings, and we cannot feel surprise that throughout its whole history it has been subjected to these above most other credal statements.

In the sister Church of Scotland, in the meantime, a Confession was hastily put together by Knox and his coadjutors and adopted by Parliament in 1560, which became the legal Confession of the Reformed Church of Scotland when that Church was established in 1567. This Confession contains an Article headed "Of Election" (viii), but its doctrine of predestination must be gathered not merely from the somewhat meagre statements of that Article, but also from other allusions under the captions especially of Providence and the Church. It asserts the universal rule of God's providence, directing all things "to sik end, as his Eternall Wisdome, Gudnes, and Justice hes appoynted them, to the manifestatioun of his awin glorie." It traces all our salvation to "the eternall and immutable decree of God." It declares that it is of the mere grace of God that we have been elected in Christ Jesus, before the foundations of the world were laid: and that our faith in Him is wrought solely by the Holy Ghost, who works in the hearts of the elect of God, and to whom is to be attributed not only faith, but all our good works. The invisible or true Church consists, it affirms, only of God's elect, but embraces the elect of all ages: while in the visible Church "the Reprobate may be joyned in the society of the elect and may externally use with them the benefits of the worde and sacraments." The whole Reformed doctrine of predestination may indeed be drawn from this Confession: but it must be allowed it is not set forth in all its elements in explicit statements. In this respect the earlier creed of the English Church of Geneva (1558), which is thought also to have come from the hands of Knox, is more precise: and indeed this creed differs from all other Reformed creeds in the circumstance—unimportant but interesting—that in setting forth the double predestination it speaks of the foreordination to death *first*: "God, of the lost race of Adam, hath ordained some as vessels of wrath to damnation; and hath chosen others as vessels of His mercy to be saved." By the side of the Scotch Confession it is not unfair to place also as a witness to the Confessional doctrine of Reformed Scotland so widely used a Catechism as that of John Craig, which was endorsed by the General Assembly of 1590, and for a half-century or more was the spiritual food on which the youth of Scotland was fed. In this admirable document the Calvinian doctrine of predestination is set forth with a completeness and crispness of expression that leaves nothing to be desired.

The subsequent history of the Confessional statement of predestination in England supplies a very interesting demonstration of the necessity of embodying in it, after Calvin's manner, the clear assertion of the *prædestinatio bipartita*, if the very essence of the doctrine is to be preserved. As long as a thorough Calvinism was dominant in the Church of England the inadequacy of the statement of predestination in the Thirty-nine Articles was, if not unremarked, at least the source of no danger to sound doctrine. Men in sympathy with the doctrine set forth readily read in the statement all its presuppositions and all its implications alike. Nobody of this class would question, for example, that in the mention in the last clause of "that will of God which we have expressly declared to us in the Word of God," that other will of God, hidden from us but ordering all things, was assumed—especially as, earlier in the statement, "His counsel, secret to us," is mentioned. Nobody would doubt that in "the predestination to life of those whom God hath chosen in Christ" specific individuals, the especial objects of God's electing grace, were expressly intended. Nobody would doubt that in the assertion of their choice "out of mankind," and predestination to deliverance from curse and damnation, it was peremptorily implied that there was a remainder of mankind left behind and hence predestinated unto the curse and damnation from which these were delivered. Nobody would doubt that in the assertion that these were by God's constant decree predestinated to be brought by Christ to everlasting salvation, the certitude of their actual salvation was asserted. But as soon as men in influential positions began to fall away from this Calvinistic faith, it was speedily discovered that something more than presupposition however clear, or implication however necessary, was needed in a Confessional statement which should serve as a barrier against serious error and a safeguard to essential truth.

The evil came, in the Church of England, naturally on the heels of a renewed assertion of sacerdotalism and sacramental grace: and it entrenched itself primarily under a plea of "Augustinianism," in distinction from "Calvinism." The high doctrine of Augustine as to the grace of the sacrament of baptism was appealed to, and his distinction between the regenerate and the elect revived; the inference was drawn that participation in grace is no warrant of final salvation, and election to grace no proof of predestination to glory; and this wedge was gradually driven in until the whole Reformed system was split up. Appeal was vainly made to the declarations of the Articles—they proved too indefinite to serve the purpose. After a sharp conflict

it became very evident that what was needed was a new Confessional statement in which the essential elements of the doctrine should be given explicit assertion. It was this that was attempted in what is known as "The Lambeth Articles," prepared by William Whittaker, and set forth with the approval of the Archbishops and certain other ecclesiastics, in the hope of leading the thought of the Church back to better channels. It was, however, now too late. The evil leaven had eaten too deeply to be now suddenly checked. It was easy to cry out that the very attempt to frame new Articles was a demonstration that the Calvinists were introducing new doctrine. The authority of the new Articles was, moreover, not complete. They were virulently assaulted. And in the failure to establish them as a Church formulary the cause of consistent Calvinism was for the time lost in the Church of England. Meanwhile better things were to be hoped of Ireland, and when, under the leading of Ussher, a series of Articles were framed for that Church the lesson taught by the course of events in the sister Church of England was taken to heart and the chapter "Of God's Eternal Decree and Predestination" was strengthened by the incorporation into it, along with the essence of the English Articles, also the new matter of the Lambeth Articles. The curb thus laid upon the inroads of error in Ireland, however, it became one of the chief objects of the English party to destroy; and this ultimately they were enabled to do and the Articles of the Church of England were quietly substituted for those of the Church of Ireland in that land also. Thus the Calvinism of the Irish Church also was fatally wounded.

The whole object and intent of the Lambeth Articles (1595) was to conserve the threatened Calvinism of the Church of England: they do not constitute a complete creed, nor even a complete statement of the doctrine of predestination and its necessary implications. They were intended merely so to supplement the statement of the Thirty-nine Articles as to guard the Reformed doctrine from undermining and destruction. They confine themselves, therefore, to asserting clearly and without unnecessary elaboration the *prædestinatio gemina*, the independence of the divine decree of election on foreseen merit in man, the definite number of the elect; the assured final condemnation of the reprobate; the perseverance of the saints; the assurance of faith; the particularity of grace; the necessity of grace to salvation; and the impotency of the natural will to salvation. Not all of these paragraphs are incorporated into that one of the Irish Articles (1615) headed "Of God's eternal decree and prede-

tination," but only such as naturally fall under that caption, while the others are utilized in other portions of the document. This particular Article is disposed in seven paragraphs. In the first a clear assertion is made of God's general decree, with a careful guarding of it against current calumnies: this is original with this document. The second paragraph sets forth in language derived from the Lambeth Articles the special decree of predestination—the *prædestinatio bipartita*. The third paragraph defines "predestination to life" in language derived from the Articles of the Church of England. The fourth explains the cause of predestination to life as, negatively, nothing in man, and, positively, the good pleasure of God alone: it is taken from the Lambeth Articles. The fifth expounds the relation of predestination to the means of grace, and is taken from the Articles of the Church of England, with the addition of a clause from the Lambeth Articles covering the fate of the reprobate. The last two paragraphs are taken with modifications from the Articles of the Church of England and set forth the use of the doctrine. The whole constitutes the high-water mark of the Confessional expression of this high mystery up to this time attained in the Reformed Churches. Nothing before it had been so prudently and so thoroughly compacted. It was rightly taken by the Westminster divines as the point of departure for the formation of their own chapter on this *locus*, and to its admirable guidance is largely due the greatness of the success of the Westminster men in dealing with this mystery in such combined faithfulness and prudence.

It was not, however, only in Britain that the Reformed were called upon to defend the treasures of truth that had been committed to them, from the inroads of that perpetual foe of the grace of God which is intrenched in the self-sufficiency of the natural heart. The rise of the Arminian party in Holland was the most serious direct assault as yet suffered by the Reformed theology. It was met by the Dutch Calvinists with a successful application of the expedient, an unsuccessful attempt to apply which in somewhat similar circumstances in England gave birth to the Lambeth Articles—by the publication, to wit, of Articles supplementary to the accepted Confession of the Church, which should more specifically guard the controverted points. The product of this counter-movement in the Dutch Churches is the Canons of Dort, published authoritatively in 1619 as the finding of the National Synod with the aid of a large body of foreign assessors, representative practically of the whole Reformed world. The Canons of Dort not only, therefore, were set forth with legal authority in the Netherlands, but possessed the moral authority of

the decrees of practically an Ecumenical Council throughout the whole body of Reformed Churches. Their form is largely determined by the Remonstrance to which they are formally a reply : it is therefore, for example, that they are divided into five heads ; and the whole distribution of the matter, as well as the especial points on which they touch, is due to the occasion of their origin. But for the points of doctrine with which they deal they provide a singularly well-considered, prudent and restrained Reformed formulary. The first head of doctrine deals directly with predestination, the rest with the connected points of particular redemption, inability, irresistible grace and perseverance. The matter under each head is disposed in two parts, in the former of which the doctrine concerned is positively set forth, while in the latter the corresponding errors that had been vexing the Churches are named and refuted.

The head on Predestination contains eighteen paragraphs in its positive portion, followed by nine more in the negative part. The starting-point is taken from a broad statement of the doctrine of original sin and man's universal guilt (§ 1). Then the provisions for man's salvation are adduced—the gift of Christ, the proclamation of the Gospel, the gift of faith (§§ 2-6)—and it is pointed out that the Gospel has actually been sent not to all men, but only to those " whom God will and at what time he pleaseth " (§ 3), and that faith is not in the power of all, but is again the gift of God to whom He pleases. Thus the obvious distinction existing among men is traced back to the divine will, and ascribed to " that decree of election and reprobation revealed in the word of God " (§ 6). The way being thus prepared, election is next defined (§ 7) and the details of the doctrine developed (§§ 7-14); after which reprobation is defined and guarded (§§ 15-16); and the whole concludes with a section on the destiny of children dying in infancy (§ 17), and another on the proper attitude of mind in the face of these holy mysteries (§ 18). The definition of election emphasizes its eternity, immutability and absolute freedom. Its object is said to be fallen men, and its end redemption, with all the means of grace adjoined. The unity of the decree of election and of the means of salvation is asserted (§ 8). Its relation to all good motives in the creature is carefully explained as not that of effect but of cause (§§ 9, 10). Its particularity and unchangeableness are emphasized (§ 11). Finally, the use of the doctrine, in the attainment of assurance, as an incitement to good works, and for the comforting of the people of God, is adverted to (§§ 12-14). The decree of reprobation is then brought in as " peculiarly tending to illustrate and recommend to us the eternal

and unmerited grace of election" and carefully defined (§ 18); and men are warned against misusing it so as to beget within themselves an ill-founded despair (§ 16). Little of importance is added to this positive statement in the sections on "the rejection of errors." These take up, one by one, the subtle Remonstrant statements and lay them by the adduction of appropriate Scriptures; they result only in strengthening and sharpening the positive propositions already asserted—particularly those that concern the immutability of God's electing counsel; its entire independence of foreseen faith or dispositions or works as causes or occasions; and its complete sovereignty in all its relations. The whole constitutes the fullest and one of the most prudent and satisfactory expositions of the Reformed doctrine of predestination ever given wide symbolical authority.

The Canons of Dort were adopted by the French Synods of 1620 and 1623; but soon afterward the French Churches were disturbed by the unsettling teachings of the school of Saumur. These teachings did not, indeed, trench upon the doctrine of predestination in its essence. Amyraut, to whom it fell among the innovating divines to deal with this matter, leaves nothing to be desired in his express loyalty to the definitions that had been the guides and guards of Reformed theology from the beginning: he copiously defended the whole Reformed doctrine as expressed by Calvin. The following is the way his position is set down in the "Declaration of the Faith of Moses Amyraut with reference to the Errors of the Arminians":**

"In the second article, what the Arminians defend is that God, having decreed from all eternity to offer one and the same grace to all men, that they might in the powers of free-will either receive or repudiate it; and having foreseen who would accept it and who would reject it; out of that foresight elected those whom He foresaw would make a good use of that grace and reprobated the rest. Thus, in their view, election is grounded in foresight of faith.

"The orthodox, on the other hand, hold, that although God decreed that all men indifferently should be invited to faith, He nevertheless in His eternal council separates a given (*certum*) number of men from the rest, to be granted a singular grace, by means of which they may obey that invitation, and thus be led to salvation; while all the rest, they hold, are passed by by Him in the dispensation of that grace (*cæteros omnes ab eo in dispensatione illius gratiæ prætermisos esse*). They add further that the reason why God has so acted is to be traced solely to His most free good pleasure, and that there was no reason or cause of any kind whatsoever in those whom He elected why they should be elected; and there existed in those whom He reprobated no cause why they should be reprobated which did not equally exist in the others. So that election and reprobation are equally absolute and neither rests on the prevision of anything (*nec ulla rei cuiusquam prævisione nitatur*).

"Amyraut embraces the same doctrine with the rest of the orthodox and has

* *Saumurii*, 1646, pp. 6, 7.

both explained and confirmed it with unrefuted reasons, drawn especially from the ninth chapter of Romans, in the thirteenth chapter of his *Defense of Calvin.*"

The point where the new French teachings affected the Reformed doctrine of predestination, therefore, was not in its substance, but in its relations—and more especially its relation in the *ordo decretorum* to the decree of the gift of Christ. Amyraut, desiring to teach a universal atonement, wished to place the decree of election in the order of thought subsequent instead of prior to the decree to give Christ to make satisfaction for sin, which satisfaction should therefore be conditional—to wit, on the faith which is the free gift of God to His elect. It was to meet this point of view, among other novelties broached by the Salmurian school, that at the beginning of the last quarter of the seventeenth century the *Helvetic Formula of Consent* was drawn up by Heidegger with the assistance of Turretin and Gernler (1675). Its prime object in the "Canons" that concern predestination, therefore, is to defend the Calvinistic order of decrees: this is set forth there with careful precision and emphasis, and the universalism of Amyraut's construction of the gift of Christ explicitly opposed and refuted. But in stating and arguing its case, the whole doctrine of election is very carefully restated, including the details of its eternity, its absoluteness, its independence on foresight of aught in man moving thereunto, its particularity and unchangeableness, and its implication of a reprobate mass left outside the reach of saving grace by the mere fact of election. The statement may well be looked upon as a typical statement of the Calvinistic position, embodying all the points which, in the course of a century and a half of creed-making, it had been found necessary to emphasize in order to bring out the doctrine in its full outline and to protect it from insidious undermining.

It is in the midst or, more precisely, near the end of this series of credal expressions of the Reformed doctrine of predestination that the Westminster Confession takes its place. Subsequent in date to all of them, with the single exception of the Swiss Form of Consent, it gathers up into itself the excellences of all. More particularly it is founded upon the Irish Articles of 1615, which in turn were compounded of the English Articles and the Lambeth Articles; and through them it goes back respectively to the thought especially of Peter Martyr and of John Calvin. There is nothing in it which is not to be found expressly set forth in the writings of these two great teachers: and it gives their teachings form under the guidance of the best Confessional statements precedent to its own origin. It quite deserves the high praises it has received from the hand of one of the greatest and most deservedly

honored of the fathers of the modern Presbyterian Church, who speaks of it with reiterated emphasis not only as "the best and fullest expression" of the Reformed system, but as "the ablest and ripest product of the great Reformation, which was so fruitful in symbolical literature."*

II.

After this introductory survey of their general character, we are now prepared to set out the text of the Confessional statements of the doctrine of predestination in the Reformed Churches. We shall extract the sections specifically devoted to the subject at large, but only so much of other matter as seems needful for understanding the nature of the Confessional recognition that is really given the doctrine. The Confessions are, in general, arranged in the order in which they have been mentioned in the preceding description of them.

ZWINGLI'S FIDEI RATIO (1530).†

Secondly.—I know that that Supreme Divinity who is my God has freely made appointment concerning all things, so that His counsel does not depend on the occasioning of any creature,^a since it is peculiar to marred human wisdom to determine on precedent discussion or example. But God, who from eternity to eternity contemplates all that is with a single and simple regard, has no need of any ratiocination, or expectation of acts, but, equally wise, prudent and good, freely determines and disposes concerning all things—seeing that all that is is His.^b Hence, though He knowingly and purposely in the beginning made the man who should fall, He yet equally determined to clothe His own Son in human nature, that He might repair the fall. . . .

Thirdly.—. . . The election of God, however, stands and remains firm, since those whom He elected before the constitution of the world He so elected as^c to choose to Himself through His Son; for He is as holy and just as He is good and merciful.^d All His works therefore savor of mercy and justice. Election therefore properly savors of both. It is of His goodness that He has elected whom He will;^e but it is of His justice that He has adopted His elect to Himself and joined them to Him through His Son as a victim offered to satisfy Divine justice for us. . . .

Sixthly.—Of the Church, then, we think as follows: The term Church is variously used in the Scriptures. For those elect ones whom God has destined to eternal life.^f It is concerning this Church that Paul speaks when he says that it has no spot or wrinkle. This Church is known to God alone; for He only, according to the word of Solomon, knows the hearts of the sons of men. But, nevertheless, those who are members of this Church know themselves, since they have

* Henry Boynton Smith, in *Faith and Philosophy*, pp. 103, 147, 283. The passages in which those expressions occur are worth reading as models of the justly fervent praise which the Westminster Standards evoke from competent readers.

† Translated from the text in Niemeyer, p. 18, *sq.*

• *West. Conf.*, III, i a; ii.

► *West. Conf.*, III, ii.

◦ *West. Conf.*, III, v a.

▫ *West. Conf.*, III, v a.

faith, to be elect and members of this first Church ;^o but they are ignorant with regard to other members. For it is thus written in the Acts : " And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Those, then, who believe are ordained to eternal life. But who truly believes no one knows but the one who believes. He then is certain that he is elected of God. For, according to the word of the Apostle, he has the Spirit as a pledge, by whom he is sponsored and sealed, and knows himself to be free and made a son of the family and not a slave. For that Spirit cannot deceive. As He declares God to be our Father, we call on Him as Father with assurance and boldness, being firmly persuaded that we shall obtain an eternal inheritance because we are sure that the Spirit of God has been poured out into our hearts. It is certain, then, that he who is thus assured and secure is elect ; for those who believe are ordained to eternal life.¹ There are, however, many elect who have not faith. For the holy Θεοτόκος, John, Paul—were they not elect while they were still infants or children, and even before the constitution of the world ? Nevertheless, they did not know this, either from faith or from revelation. Matthew, Zacchaeus, the Thief, and the Magdalene—were they not elect before the constitution of the world, though they were ignorant of the fact until they were illuminated by the Spirit and drawn to Christ by the Father ? From them, then, we may learn that this first Church is known to God only, and that those only who have firm and unwavering faith know that they are members of this Church. But, once again, the term Church is used universally of all who are enrolled in the name of Christ—*i. e.*, who have given in their names to Christ, a good part of whom have openly acknowledged Christ by confession or participation in the Sacraments while still in heart they are either alienated from Him or ignorant of Him. We believe therefore that all those who have confessed the name of Christ belong to this Church. Thus Judas was of the Church of Christ, and all those that draw back from Christ. For Judas was thought by the Apostles to be not less of Christ's Church than Peter or John, since he was no less so. But Christ knew who were His and who was the devil's. There is, then, this visible Church in this world, however unfit, and all who confess Christ are in it, though many of them are reprobates.^s For Christ depicted that charming allegory of the ten virgins, five of whom were wise and five foolish. And this Church is sometimes called elect, although it is not that first Church which is without spot ; but since it is, according to man's judgment, the Church of God, on account of public confession, it is therefore called elect. For we judge those to be believers and elect who give in their names to Christ. So Peter spoke when he said, "To the elect who are scattered abroad in Pontus," etc. There by the name of elect he means all who were of the Churches to which he was writing, not those only who were properly God's elect : for as they were unknown to Peter, he was not able to write to them. Finally, the word Church is used for any particular congregation of this universal and visible Church.

ZWINGLI'S EXPOSITIO CHR. FIDEI (1531).*

[103] It is therefore by the grace and goodness of God alone, which He has abundantly poured out on us in Christ, that eternal bliss is attained. What, then, shall we say of the passage of Scripture adduced above, in which a reward is promised for a draught of cold water and the like ? This to wit : That the election of God is free and gratuitous ; for He elected us before the constitution of the world, before we were born. God therefore did not elect us on account of works.

* Published by Bullinger, after Zwingli's death. Translated from the text in Niemeyer, p. 58.

^o *West. Conf.*, III, 8.

¹ *West. Conf.*, III, iii ; vii.

^s *West. Conf.*, III, 8.

but He elected us before the creation of the world.^b Our works therefore have no merit. But when He promises a reward for works it is after a human manner of speech ; "for," says Augustine, "what wilt Thou, O good God, remunerate except Thine own work ? For since it is Thou that workest in us both the willing and the doing, what is left for us to claim for ourselves ? For . . ." etc.

THE TETRAPOLITAN CONFESION (1530).*

III. *Of Justification and Faith*.— . . . For since it is our righteousness and eternal life to know God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ ; and it is so impossible for this to be the work of flesh and blood that it is needful for it to be born again anew ; and we cannot come to the Son except by the Father's drawing, nor know the Father except by the Son's revelation ; and Paul has written so expressly that it is not of us nor of works :—it is clear enough that our works can help nothing at all toward our becoming righteous from the unrighteous ones which we were born ; because that, as we are by nature children of wrath and therefore unrighteous, so we avail to do nothing righteous or acceptable to God, but the beginning of all our righteousness and salvation must needs come from the mercy of God, who out of his grace (*dignatione*) alone and the contemplation of the death of His Son offers in the first instance the doctrine of truth and His Gospel, sending those who shall proclaim it ; and then, since the natural man is not at all able, as Paul says, to perceive the things of God (1 Cor., 2), makes at the same time to arise in the darkness of our hearts the ray of His light, so that we may now have faith in the proclaimed Gospel, being persuaded of its truth by the supreme Spirit, and forthwith may, enjoying the testimony of this Spirit, call upon God in filial confidence, and say, Abba, Father, obtaining thereby sure salvation according to that saying, " Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved."

IV. *Of Good Works proceeding out of Faith through Love*.—But we are unwilling that these things should be so understood as if we placed salvation and righteousness in the slothful thoughts of the mind, or in faith destitute of love, which is called *fides informis* ; seeing that we are sure that no one can be righteous or be saved unless he loves God supremely and imitates Him zealously. For whom He foreknew, the same He also predestinated to become conformed to the image of His Son, to wit, as in the glory of a blessed life, so also in the cultivation of innocence and consummate righteousness, for we are His workmanship, created unto good works.* But no one is able to love God above all things, and to emulate Him with worthy zeal, except he do indeed know Him and receive the promise of all good things from Him. . . .

FIRST BOHEMIAN CONFESION (1535).†

III. . . . Hence also they teach that there belong to this one God, supreme power, wisdom and goodness. There also belong to Him alone those most excellent works, suitable to no other than Him. These are the works of creation, redemption, conservation, or sanctification. They teach, moreover, that this only true God, in one essence of divinity and blessed trinity of persons, is to be ever adored, venerated and worshipped with supreme reverence, honor and praise as the supreme Lord and King of all things, regnant eternally: and from His hand alone are all things to be looked for and sought. . . .

VI. . . . They teach, moreover, that through Christ men are mercifully justified freely by faith in Christ, and obtain salvation and remission of sins, apart from all human work and merit. Likewise they teach that His death and blood

* Translated from the text in Niemeyer, p. 746 sq.

† From the text in Niemeyer, 789, 793, 796.

^b West. Conf., III, v b.

* West. Conf., III, 6.

alone is sufficient for abolishing and expiating all the sins of all men. . . . They likewise teach that no one can have this faith by his own power, will or choice; since it is the gift of God who, where and when it seems good to Him, works it in man through the Holy Spirit.* . . .

VIII. Concerning the Holy Catholic Church, they teach first of all that the head and foundation of the Church is Christ the Lord by His own merit, grace and truth, in whom it is built up by the Holy Spirit, the word and sacraments. . . .

SECOND BOHEMIAN CONFESION (1575).*

III. And so He is the perfect Mediator, Advocate and Intercessor with God the Father, Reconciler, Redeemer and Saviour of our Church, which by His Holy Spirit He collects, conserves, protects and rules until the number of God's elect shall be completed.^b . . .

XI. But such a company of good and bad men is called and is the Catholic, Christian and Holy Church, only with respect to the good fishes and wheat—that is, the elect children of God and true and faithful Christians, all of whom as a whole and without exception are holy with a holiness imputed in Christ and begun in them by the Holy Spirit; and these only God deigns to call His sheep, the community of whom is really the bride of Christ, the house of God, the pillar and ground of the truth, the mother of all the faithful and the sole ark out of which there is no salvation. . . .

FIRST BASLE OR MÜHLHAUSEN CONFESION (1534).†

II. *Of Creation and Providence.* We believe that God created all things by His Eternal Word, *i. e.*, by His only-begotten Son; and sustains and animates all things by His Spirit, His own power: and therefore that God, as He created, so oversees and governs all things. Gen. i. 1; John i. 3; 1 Chron. xxix. 11, 12; Acts ii. 23.

III. *Of Predestination.* Hereupon we confess that God, before He had created the world, had elected all those to whom He would give the inheritance of eternal salvation.¹ Rom. viii. 29, 30, ix. 11–13, xi. 5; Eph. iv. 4–6. . . .

VI. And although man by the same fall became liable to damnation and inimical to God, God nevertheless never ceased to care for the human race. This is witnessed by the patriarchs; the promises before and after the flood; the law likewise given by God to Moses; and the holy prophets. Rom. v. 16; Gen. xii. 1, xiv. 19, 20, xv. 1; Ex. iii. 15, xxi. 15, xxvi. 24, 34, xxviii. 13, 14, 15.

FIRST HELVETIC OR SECOND BASLE CONFESION (1536).‡

9. *Free Will.* Thus, we attribute free will to man in such a manner that though we are conscious of both knowing and willing to do good and evil, we are able indeed of our own motion to do the evil, but are unable to embrace and pursue the good, except as illuminated by the grace of Christ and impelled by His Spirit. For God it is who works in us both the willing and the doing, according to His good pleasure.^j And it is from God that salvation comes, from us perdition. Phil. ii.; Hos. xiii.

10. *The Eternal Counsel of God Concerning the Reparation of Man.* For this man, therefore, devoted by his fault to damnation, and incurring righteous indignation, God the Father has nevertheless never ceased to care. And this is made

* From the text in Niemeyer. † Niemeyer, pp. 79, 87. ‡ Niemeyer, p. 117, cf. 107.

^a West. Conf., III, 6 b.

ⁱ West. Conf., III, v, a.

^b West. Conf., III, 6 b.

^j West., III, vi.

plain by the primal promises, and by the whole law (which arouses and does not extinguish sin) and by Christ who was ordained and set forth for this very purpose. Eph. 1; Rom. 7.

THE HUNGARIAN CONFESSION (1557-1558).*

Out of the word of God we call Him Father, God and Jehovah, having life in Himself, existent from none, wanting all beginning, who from eternity without any beginning or change begot out of his own hypostasis as it were the character and splendor of His glory, the only begotten Son--through whom He from eternity foreknew and disposed all things,^k and in the beginning created and conserves them, and saves His elect by justifying them, but condemns the impious.^l

Thirdly, [eternity] is used of a continuous time—that is, of the period in which the world was created, of the days in which the world was made. Hence it is said : He elected us before times eternal, *i. e.*, He elected before the seven days of creation, before creation, from eternity (Eph i. 2, 3, 5 ; 2 Tim. i. 2, 3).^m Fourthly, it is used of the infinite salvation of the pious and the torment of the impious : and this salvation and condemnation, though they have a beginning in the elect and the vessels of wrath, nevertheless want an end.

As it is impossible that things that are in direct repugnance to one another and are mutually destructive can be the efficient and formal cause of their contraries ; as light is not the cause of darkness, nor heat of cold (Psalm v. 46, 61, 66, 80, 84, 114, 135) ; so it is impossible for God, who is Light, Righteousness, Truth, Wisdom, Goodness, Life, to be the cause of darkness, sin and falsehood, ignorance, blindness, malice and death ; but Satan and men are the cause of all these. For God cannot *ex se* and *per se* do things that He prohibits and on account of which He condemns.ⁿ

As He who justly renders to those who work equally an equal reward, and who gives to the undeserving, out of grace and voluntarily, what He will, is not a respecter of persons ; so God had acted justly, if out of debt, according to justice and His own law, He had rendered death and condemnation as the stipend of sin to all who deserve it. And on the other hand, when for the sake of His son, out of the plenitude of His grace and in His freedom of will, He gives to the undeserving righteousness and life,^o this is not *prosopoliptis*, *i. e.*, He is not a respecter of persons, as it is said : “Take what is thine and what thou has deserved and go : Is it not lawful for me to do what I please with my own ? Is it not thy eye that is evil ? not my eye, because I am good ” (Matt. xx.)

We confess Christ as Redeemer for these reasons Then, too, that He might make satisfaction for the life-giving mercy of God by the omnipotence of the same Word and only-begotten Son of God, according to the eternal election made from eternity in Christ (Eph. 1).^p

SECOND HELVETIC CONFESION (1562, 1566).†

Chapter vi. *Of the Providence of God.* By the Providence of this wise, eternal and omnipotent God, we believe that all things in heaven and in earth and

* Niemeyer, pp. 542, 546, 549. The *title* in Niemeyer reads : “The true Confession derived from the Word of God and set forth and published with one consent, in the Synod of Czenger : I, On the one and only God IX, On respect of persons in God because He saves some and hardens others.”

† Niemeyer, p. 474, 477, 481, 489 ; Schaff, III, p. 244, 248, 252.

^k West. Conf., III, i, a.

ⁿ West. Conf., III, i, b.

^l West. Conf., III, iii.

^o West. Conf., III, v.

^m West. Conf., III, v.

^p West. Conf., III, v.

among all the creatures are conserved and governed. . . . Meanwhile, however, we do not despise the means by which divine providence operates, as if they were useless. . . . For God, who has determined its own end to everything,^a has ordained both the principle and the means by which it shall attain its end. The Gentiles attribute things to blind fortune or uncertain chance. . . .

Chapter viii. *Of Man's Fall, Sin and the Cause of Sin.* . . . We condemn moreover Florinus and Blastus, against whom also Irenæus wrote, and all who make God the author of sin. . . . There is enough vice and corruption in us for it to be by no means necessary for God to infuse into us new and increased depravity. Accordingly when God is said in Scripture to harden, to blind, and to give over to a reprobate mind, it is to be understood that He does this by a righteous judgment, as a just judge and avenger. In fine, whenever God is said or seems to do any evil in Scripture, it is not so said because it is not man that does the evil, but because God, who could prevent it if He wished, in just judgment permits it to be done and does not prevent it; or because He has made a good use of the evil of men, as in the case of the sins of Joseph's brethren; or because He reins in the sins, that they may not break out too widely and riot.^r St. Augustine, in his *Enchiridion*, says: "In a marvelous and ineffable way, that does not take place apart from His will, which yet takes place against His will. For it would not be done, if he did not permit it to be done. Nor is it unwillingly that He permits it but willingly. Neither would the Good One permit evil to be done, were not the Omnipotent One able to bring good out of the evil."

Remaining questions—whether God willed Adam to fall, or impelled him to his fall, or why He did not prevent his fall, and the like, we account (except, perhaps, when the improbity of heretics or other importunate men compel them too to be explained out of God's word, as has been done not seldom by pious doctors of the Church) among those curious inquiries which the Lord prohibits, lest man should eat of the forbidden fruit and his transgression be punished; but things that take place are certainly not evil with respect to the providence of God, God's will and power, but with respect to Satan and our will in opposition to God's will." . . .

Chapter x. *Of the Predestination of God and the Election of the Saints.* God has from eternity freely and of His mere grace, with no respect of men, predestinated or elected the saints whom He will save in Christ;^t according to that saying of the Apostle: "God hath chosen us in Himself before the foundations of the world were laid" (Eph. i. 4), and again: "Who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given unto us through Jesus Christ before times eternal, but is now made manifest by the appearance of our Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. i. 9, 10).

Therefore, not without means,^u though not on account of any merit of ours, but in Christ and on account of Christ, God elected us; so that those who are now ingrafted into Christ by faith the same also are elect;^v but they are reprobates, who are without Christ, according to that saying of the Apostle: "Prove yourselves whether you are in faith. Know ye not your own selves that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Cor. xiii. 5).

In fine, the saints are elected by God in Christ to a sure end, which very end the Apostle sets forth when he says:^w "He has chosen us in Him that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love; and he has predestinated us that He might adopt us through Jesus Christ to Himself to the praise of the glory of His grace" (Eph. i. 4, 5, 6).

^a *West. Conf.*, III, i, a.

^u *West. Conf.*, III, vi, a.

^r *West. Conf.*, III, i, b.

^v *West. Conf.*, III, viii.

^s *West. Conf.*, III, i, b.

^w *West. Conf.*, III, v, a.

^t *West. Conf.*, III, v, a.

And although God knows who are His,^{w2} and mention is now and then made of the fewness of the elect, we must nevertheless hope well of all, and not rashly number any among the reprobates. Paul certainly says to the Philippians: "I give thanks for you all" (and he is speaking of the whole Philippian Church), "that you have come into the fellowship of the Gospel, being persuaded that He who has begun a good work in you will perfect it, as it is right for me to think this of you all" (Phil. i. 3-7).

And when the Lord was asked (Luke xiii) whether there are few that shall be saved, the Lord does not say in reply that few or more are to be saved or lost, but rather exhorts that each should strive to enter in at the strait gate, as if He should say, It is not for you to inquire curiously about these things, but rather to endeavor to enter heaven by the straight path.^x

Wherefore we do not approve of the wicked speeches of some who say, "Few are elected, and as it does not appear whether I am in that number of the few I will not defraud my nature." Others say, "If I be predestinated or elected by God, nothing can hinder me from a salvation already certainly decreed, no matter what I may ever commit; but if I be in the number of the reprobate no faith or repentance either will help me, since the appointment of God cannot be changed: therefore all teachings and admonitions are useless." For to these that saying of the Apostles is opposed: "The servant of the Lord must be apt to teach, instructing them that are contrary minded, if at any time God will give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth, that they may escape from the snare of the devil who are held captive by him to his will" (2 Tim. ii. 24-26).

But Augustine also, in his work on the *Blessing of Perseverance*, shows that there are to be preached both the grace of free election and predestination, and salutary admonitions and doctrines. We, therefore, condemn those who seek outside of Christ whether they are elect and what God had decreed concerning them from all eternity.^y

For the preaching of the Gospel must be heard and faith be given it: and it is to be held indubitable that thou art elect if thou believest and art in Christ. For the Father has laid bare to us in Christ the eternal sentence of His predestination, as we have just shown from the Apostle (2 Tim. i).^z There is to be taught, therefore, and considered before all things, how great the love of the Father toward us is that is revealed to us in Christ; and what the Lord preaches to us daily in the Gospel must be heard—how He calls and says: "Come to me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28); "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten for the world, that every one who believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (John iii. 16); again: "It is not the will of the Father that any one of these little ones should perish" (Matt. xviii. 14).

Let Christ then be the mirror in which we contemplate our predestination. We shall have a sufficiently clear and sure witness that we are written in the book of life if we participate in Christ and He is ours in true faith and we His. Let it console us in the temptation of predestination, than which there is scarcely any more perilous, that the promises of God to believers are universal and that He Himself has said: "Ask and ye shall find. Every one that asketh, receiveth" (Luke xi. 9, 10):^a in fine, that we pray with the whole Church of God: "Our Father which art in Heaven:" and that we are ingrafted into the body of Christ by baptism, and are repeatedly fed in the Church with His body and blood to life eternal. Confirmed by these things we are commanded, according to this precept of Paul, "to work out our salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. ii. 12).

^{w2} West. Conf., III, 4.

^x West. Conf., III, viii.

^x West. Conf., III, viii.

^y West. Conf., III, viii.

^z West. Conf., III, viii.

Chapter xiii. *Of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.* For God has from eternity predestinated to save the world through Christ, and has manifested this His predestination and eternal counsel to the world through the Gospel (2 Tim. ii. 9, 10). Whence it is clear that the evangelical religion and doctrine is the most ancient of all, among all that have ever been, are or shall be. And hence we say that they all err dreadfully and speak unworthily of the eternal counsel of God, who describe the evangelical doctrine and religion as lately arisen and a faith scarcely thirty years old.

HEIDELBERG CATECHISM (1563).*

I, with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ, who with His precious blood has fully satisfied for all my sins, and redeemed me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me that without the will of my Father in heaven not a hair can fall from my head; yea that all things must work together for my salvation. Wherefore, by His Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me heartily willing and ready henceforth to live unto Him (I).

The eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who of nothing made heaven and earth, with all that in them is, who likewise upholds and governs the same by His eternal counsel and providence, is for the sake of Christ, His Son my God and my Father, in whom I so trust as to have no doubt that He will provide me with all things necessary for body and soul; and further, that whatever evil He sends upon me in this vale of tears, He will turn to my good; for He is able to do it, being Almighty God, and willing also, being a faithful Father (XXVI).

[The Providence of God is] the almighty and everywhere present power of God, whereby, as it were by His hand, He still upholds heaven and earth, with all creatures, and so governs them that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, yea, all things, come not by chance but by His fatherly hand (XXVII).*

[Christ] is ordained [verordnet] of God the Father, and anointed with the Holy Ghost, to be our Chief Prophet and Teacher, who fully reveals to us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption. . . . (XXXI).

I look for the self-same One . . . to come again as Judge from heaven; who shall cast all His and my enemies into everlasting condemnation, but shall take me, with all His chosen ones, to Himself, into heavenly joy and glory (LII).

The Son of God from the beginning of the world to its end, by His Spirit and Word, out of the whole human race, gathers, protects and preserves for Himself unto eternal life, in the unity of the true faith, an elected communion;^b and I am and ever shall remain a living member of the same (LIV—Definition of the “Holy Catholic Christian Church”).

ANHALT REPETITION (1581).†

* * * * *

* Schaff, at the questions noted (III, p. 307, *et seq.*). The English translation of the (German) Reformed Church of the United States is used, except in the extract from Q. LIV, which is translated afresh from the German, in order to bring out the strength of the language, which is perhaps somewhat obscured in the above-mentioned translation.

† Not a Reformed creed, but represents the milder “Lutheranism in opposition to the Flacian party” (Schaff). See Schaff, I, 563.

^a West. Conf., III, 1.

^b West. Conf., III, 5.

BRANDENBURG CONFESSIONS.*

1. *The Confession of Sigismund (1614).*

In the Article on eternal election or predestination to eternal life His Electoral Highness acknowledges and confesses that it is the most comfortable of all, on which chiefly rest not only all other Articles, but also our blessedness—that, to wit, God the Almighty, out of His pure grace and mercy, without any respect to man's worthiness, merit or works,^a before the foundations of the world were laid, ordained and elected to eternal life all who constantly believe in Christ,^f knows also and acknowledges them as His, and as He has loved them from eternity, so endows them also out of pure grace with justifying faith and strong endurance to the end, so that no one shall pluck them out of the hand of Christ and no one separate them from His love, and all things, good and bad alike, must work together for good to them, because they are called according to the purpose.^g Likewise also that God has, according to His strict righteousness, eternally passed by all who do not believe in Christ, and prepared them for the everlasting fire of hell, as it stands expressly written:^h “He who does not believe in the Son is judged already,” “He who does not believe in the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides (and therefore it is already) on him”—not as if God were a cause of the sinner's destruction, not as if He had pleasure in the sinner's death, not as if He were an author and inciter of sin,ⁱ not as if he did not wish all to be saved, for the contrary is to be found everywhere in the Holy Scriptures; but that the cause of sin and destruction is to be sought only in Satan and the godless, *who are repudiated to damnation on account of their unbelief and disobedience to God.* And moreover that *of no man's salvation is it to be doubted so long as the means of salvation are used*, because it is not known to any man at what time God will mightily call His own, or who will hereafter believe or not, since God is not limited to any time and does all things according to His pleasure. And, on the other hand, His Electoral Highness rejects all and every of such partly blasphemous and partly dangerous opinions and assertions as that we must climb up into heaven and there search out in a special register or in God's secret treasury and council chamber who are predestinated to eternal life and who not; for God has sealed the Book of Life, and no creature can pry into it (2 Tim., ii. 19). Likewise [he rejects] that God has elected some, *propter fidem prævisam*, on account of foreseen faith, which is Pelagian;^j and that *He does not desire the greater part to be saved, but condemns them absolutely, nakedly, without any cause, and therefore not on account of sin*, for certainly the righteous God has never determined on damnation except for sin,^k and therefore the decree of reprobation to damnation is not to be regarded as an *absolutum decretum*, a free, naked decree, as the Apostle says of the rejected Jews: “Behold the branches were broken off on account of their unbelief.” Again [he rejects], *that the elect may live just as they choose, and, on the other hand, nothing can help those that are not elect, no Word, no Sacrament, no piety*; for certainly from the Word of God it is clear that no good tree brings forth evil fruit, and that God has elected us that we should be holy and unblamable before Him in love (Eph., i. 4); and that whosoever abides as a good branch in the vine of Christ brings forth much fruit; and that whosoever does not abide in Him shall be cut off as a branch and wither, and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they must burn, as Christ the Lord Himself says (John, xv. 5-6).

* From the texts in Niemeyer.

^a West. Conf., III, v, b.ⁱ West. Conf., III, i, b.^f West. Conf., III, v, a.^j West. Conf., III, v, b.^g West. Conf., III, vi, a, b.^k West. Conf., III, vii, b.^h West. Conf., III, vii, a, b.

2. *The Leipzig Colloquy (1631).*

And although the doctrine of eternal election is not expressly treated in the Augsburg Confession, nevertheless it has seemed wise to the theologians of both sides to set forth their doctrine and meaning on this point also, concerning which there has been hitherto much strife. The Brandenburgian and Hessian theologians declare therefore the following to be their unanimous doctrine and belief, to wit :

That God chose from eternity in Jesus Christ out of the lost race of man, not all, but some men,¹ whose number and names are known to Him alone,^m whom He in His own time, through the power and operation of His Word and Spirit, illuminates and renews to faith in Christ ; and also enlightens in the same faith to the end and finally makes eternally blessed through faith.ⁿ

That He moreover found or foresaw no cause or occasion or precedent means or condition of such choice in the elect themselves—whether their good works or their faith or even the first holy inclination or emotion or consent to faith, but that all that is good in them flows originally from the pure free grace of God which is eternally ordained and given to them alone in Jesus Christ.^o

That also God from eternity ordained and reprobated those who persevere in their sins and unbelief to eternal damnation,^p not out of such an *absolutum decretum*, or naked will and decree, as if God either from eternity ordains or in time creates the greater part of the world or any men, without regard to their sins and unbelief, to eternal damnation, or to the cause thereof; but the reprobation as well as the damnation takes place out of His just judgment, the cause of which is in man himself, to wit, his sin, impenitence and unbelief;^q that therefore the entire fault and cause of the reprobation and damnation of the unbelieving is in themselves ; the entire cause, however, of the election and blessedness of believers is alone the pure and mere grace of God in Jesus Christ,^r according to the Word of the Lord : “ O Israel ! thou dost bring thyself into unhappiness : thy salvation, however, stands in me alone.”

That, therefore, further, each should be assured of and should know his election and blessedness, not *à priori* from the hidden counsel of God, but only *à posteriori* from the revealed Word of God, and from his faith and the fruits of his faith in Christ;^s and that it does not at all follow, as the wicked world mockingly misrepresents this high Article, and much less can it be taught, that “ whoever is elected may persevere in his godlessness as long as he chooses, and nevertheless he must be saved,” while “ whoever is not elected, even though he should believe in Christ and live a godly life, must nevertheless be damned.”

If, however, any would search and pry more deeply into this high mystery and seek for other reasons besides God’s free, gracious and righteous will why God has nevertheless actually brought to faith only some from among men who are alike by nature, and all of whom He could assuredly by His Almightyness have brought to faith and salvation, while on the other hand He has left the rest in their sins and voluntary, obstinate impenitence and unbelief :—then they [the Brandenburg and Hessian theologians] say with the Apostle : “ Who art thou, O man, that would dispute with God ? Has not the potter power, out of one impure mass of sin, to make one vessel to honor of pure grace, and another to dis-honor of just judgment ? O the depth of the riches and knowledge of God ! How inconceivable are His judgments and how unsearchable His ways ! Who has become His counselor ? Or who has known His mind ? Or who has given to Him first that it may be recompensed to Him ? ”

¹ *West. Conf.*, III, v, a.

^p *West. Conf.*, III, vii.

^m *West Conf.*, III, iv.

^q *West. Conf.*, III, vii, b.

ⁿ *West. Conf.*, III, vi.

^r *West. Conf.*, III, v, a.

^o *West. Conf.*, III, v, b.

^s *West. Conf.*, III, viii.

[*On the other hand the Saxon theologians declare themselves in the following fashion :

1. That God from eternity, and before the foundation of the world was laid, elected in Christ not all, but some men to eternal blessedness.
2. That the number and names of the elect are known to God alone, as the Lord says: "He knows His sheep," and, as St. Paul says: "God knows His own."
3. That God from eternity elected those of whom He saw that they in time would, through the power and operation of His Word and Spirit, believe in Christ and persevere in their faith to the end; and although the elect may for a while fall away from the grace of God, yet it is impossible that this should happen *finaliter* and persistently.
4. That God, in election, found no cause or occasion of such election in the elected themselves, not even a first holy inclination, emotion or consent to faith; but that all that is good in the elect flows originally from the pure free grace of God, which is given them in Christ from eternity.
5. That God from eternity ordained to eternal damnation and reprobation those only whom He knew would persevere in their sins and unbelief.
6. That this reprobation has not at all taken place out of an *absolutum decretum* or naked decree and will, as if God had condemned any one out of His sole pleasure, without regard to man's unbelief. For there was no such naked decree in God, by virtue of which He has either from eternity ordained or in time created either the greater part of mankind or even only a single man to eternal damnation or to the cause thereof.
7. That, however, although so many men are eternally lost and condemned, this happens certainly out of the just judgment of God; but the cause of this condemnation is in the men themselves, to wit, in their dominating sins, their unbelief and impenitence; that therefore the entire fault and cause of the reprobation and condemnation is in themselves, while the entire cause of the election and blessedness of believers is the pure and mere grace of God in Jesus Christ, according to the Word of the Lord: "O Israel! thou dost bring thyself into unhappiness; thy salvation, however, stands in me alone" (Hos. 13).
8. That each one should and may be assured of his election and blessedness, not *a priori* out of the hidden counsel of God, but only *a posteriori* out of the revealed Word of God and out of his faith in Christ; and that it does not at all follow as the wicked world mockingly misrepresents this high Article, and much less can or should it be taught that "Whoever is elected may persevere in his godlessness as long as he chooses, and nevertheless he must and will be saved," while "Whoever is not elected must therefore be damned, although he ever so surely believes in Christ or lives ever so godly a life."
9. That in this high mystery of election there are many questions mooted by men which we in this mortality cannot understand, nor answer otherwise than out of St. Paul: "Who art thou, O man, that disputest with God?" (Rom. 9). Again: "O the depths of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How inconceivable are His judgments and how unsearchable His ways! Who has become His counselor? And who has known His mind? or who has given to Him that it may be recompensed him?" (Rom. 11).
10. Concerning all this the Saxon theologians have declared themselves, that they also further hold as correct and accordant with the Holy Scriptures all that is taught concerning this Article in the Book of Concord. And that God in particular chose us in Christ, out of grace indeed, but in such a manner that He foresaw who would believe in Christ perseveringly and in verity, and whom God foresaw that they would so believe, them He also ordained and elected to make blessed and glorious.]

3. *The Declaration of Thurn (1645).*

OF GRACE.—1. From sin and death there is no redemption or justification through the powers of nature, or through the righteousness of the law, but only through the grace of God in Christ, who has redeemed us, when dead in sins, from wrath and the curse, by making full satisfaction by the unique sacrifice of His death and the merit of His perfect obedience for our sins, and not for ours only but for the sins of the whole world:

2. Who has efficaciously called us, when redeemed, by the Word of the Gospel and the Spirit of grace, out of the kingdom of sin and death into the kingdom of grace and life; and has sealed us by the sacraments of grace:

3. Who justifies us or absolves us from sins and adopts us as sons, when we are called and are sincerely repentant, on account of the merit of Christ alone, apprehended by a living faith; and of mere grace imparted to believers, as members of Christ:

4. And likewise by the Spirit of love poured out into our hearts, daily more and

* This Lutheran statement is inserted here for purposes of comparison.

more renews us to a sincere zeal for holiness and new obedience, and sanctifies us or makes us righteous and holy :

5. Who, finally, will by the same grace eternally glorify us, persevering to the end of life in faith and love, as heirs of the kingdom of heaven, not out of any merit but out of the grace promised in Christ :

6. And so also will paternally, on account of Christ, reward our good works, done by the grace of the Spirit in faith in Christ and in love, with a most abundant, nay infinite reward, beyond and above their merit :

7. Even as^t He has from eternity elected us in Christ, not out of any foreseen faith or merit of works or disposition,^u but out of mere and undeserved grace,^v as well to that same grace of redemption, vocation, justification, adoption and persevering sanctification which He has given in time,^w as to the crown of eternal life and the glory^x which is to be participated in by these means.^y

8. The rest, who hold back the truth in unrighteousness and contumaciously spurn the offered grace of Christ, being rejected in righteous judgment.^z

From this doctrine of grace, in which the whole system of our salvation is contained, thus summarily set forth :

1. We hope it is manifest that we by no means accord with Socinus, who blasphemously denies and oppugns the satisfaction and merit of Christ, and therefore the very redemption made in His blood.

2. We deny, however, that beyond the death of Christ any, even the least part, of our redemption and salvation can be attributed to sacrifices, or merits or satisfactions, whether of saints or of ourselves.

3. We deny also that unregenerate men, by any merit of congruity, if they do what is in them to do, dispose themselves to the first grace of vocation.

4. Nor do we suspend the efficacy of the grace of vocation on the free will of man, as if it were not God by His special grace but man by his own will that makes himself to differ.

5. Yet we are falsely accused as if we denied the sufficiency for all of the death and merit of Christ, or diminish its power, when rather we teach the same that the Council of Trent set forth, Sess. 6, Cap. 3, to wit : "Although Christ died for all, all nevertheless do not receive the benefit of His death, but those only to whom the merit of His passion is communicated." The cause or fault moreover why it is not communicated to all we confess to be by no means in the death or merit of Christ, but in men themselves.

6. We are also falsely accused : As if we taught that not all those who are called by the Word of the Gospel are called seriously and sincerely or sufficiently by God for repentance and salvation, but the most only simulating and hypocritically by a mere external will *signi*, with which no internal will *beneplaciti* is present, as from one who does not will the salvation of all. We most solemnly protest that we are very far removed from such an opinion, distorted against us from the ill-understood or perhaps even ill-considered words of some, and that we attribute to the Thrice-blessed God supreme verity and sincerity in all His sayings and doings, and above all in the Word of the grace that calls to salvation, and do not imagine any contradictory wills in Him.

7. As if we denied all inherent righteousness to believers, and held that they are justified by an external imputation of the righteousness of Christ alone, which is without any internal renovation. When rather we teach that righteousness is imputed only to those that repent and believe in Christ with true faith, and at the same time by the same faith contrite hearts are vivified by the Holy Spirit, are

^t *West. Conf.*, III, vi.

^x *West. Conf.*, III, v, a.

^u *West. Conf.*, III, v, b.

^y *West. Conf.*, III, vi, a.

^v *West. Conf.*, III, v, a.

^z *West. Conf.*, III, vii.

^w *West. Conf.*, III, vi, b.

excited to ardent love for Christ and zeal for new obedience, are cleansed from depraved passions and so the righteousness and holiness of a new life are begun and daily advanced. This only we add, that in this inherent righteousness of our own, because it is imperfect in this life, no one can stand before the just judgment of God, or trust in it, so as to be justified or absolved by it from liability to death, but through and on account of the perfect righteousness and merit of Christ alone, apprehended by a living faith.

8. As if we imagined that a man is justified by faith only, which is without works and which only believes that sins are remitted to it for Christ's sake, although it abides without any repentance for them; when rather we confess that such a faith is wholly false, and that a man is not only not justified by it, but is even more gravely condemned on account of it, as transforming the grace of God into license for sinning. What we say is that that is true justifying faith which embraces with a practical or fiduciary assent the promises of the Gospel, by which remission and life in Christ are offered to the repentant, and applies it to oneself by a truly contrite heart, and which is therefore efficacious through love. We say that only it justifies; not because it is alone, but because only it apprehends the promise of the Gospel and therefore the very righteousness of Christ, through and on account of which alone we are freely, without any merit of our own, justified.

9. As if by this doctrine we took away zeal for good works, or denied their necessity; when rather it is manifest from what has already been said, that neither justifying faith nor justification itself can possibly exist in adults without sanctification and zeal in good works. And in this sense we acknowledge that they are altogether necessary for salvation, although not as meritorious causes of justification or salvation.

10. As if we held that the precepts of Christ can in no way be kept by believers; when rather we teach that they not only can be kept, not indeed in men's own powers, but by the grace of the Holy Spirit, but also that they ought altogether to be kept by all, and that not merely by an ineffectual vow or purpose, but also by the deed itself, and that by the sincere and persevering effort of a whole life. Nevertheless, they are not and cannot be kept in this life by any one so perfectly that we can by our works satisfy the law of God and fulfill it in all respects, but have need daily to ask humbly of God, out of a sense of our imperfection and weakness, forgiveness of varied lapses and derelictions.

11. As if we held that the justified cannot even for a moment lose God's grace or the assurance of it, or the Holy Spirit Himself, though they indulge themselves in sinful pleasures; when on the contrary we teach that even the regenerate, as often as they fall into sins against their conscience, and for as long as they continue in them, do not for that time retain either living faith or the justifying grace of God, or yet the assurance of it or the Holy Spirit, but incur new liability to wrath and eternal death, and will certainly, moreover, be damned, unless they are again renewed to repentance by the operation of the special grace of God (which we do not doubt will take place in the case of the elect).^a

12. We deny, furthermore, that faith in Christ justifies only dispositively, preparatively, initially, because, to wit, it disposes to love and other virtues, that is to say, to inherent righteousness.

13. We deny also that by that inherent righteousness of our own, we are so justified that we are absolved from liability to death by and on account of it before the judgment of God, are adopted as sons and are pronounced worthy of eternal life; in which forensic sense the word Justification is used by the Holy Ghost in this doctrine. For although there is a sound sense in which it may be said that believers are justified, that is, are made righteous and holy, by love and other infused virtues, this righteousness nevertheless is imperfect in this life and can never

^a *West. Conf.*, III, vi.

stand, as aforesaid, before the severe judgment of God ; and this alone is what is under consideration in this doctrine.

14. Hence, also, we do not agree with those who teach that the regenerate by good works make satisfaction to the justice of God for their sins, and properly merit remission or life, and that indeed out of condignity, or out of the intrinsic worthiness of their works, or their equality with the rewards : every covenant, moreover, or promise, as some wish, being excluded.

15. Nor yet with those who teach that the regenerate can keep the law of God perfectly in this life, with a perfection not only of parts but also of degrees, so that they live without any sin, such as is in itself and its own nature mortal : and even that they can do works of supererogation transcending the perfection of the law, and by them merit not for themselves only but for others as well.

16. Nor yet with those who teach that no one without special revelation can certainly know that he has obtained the grace of God with such certitude that he cannot be mistaken ; and that all ought to be always in doubt of grace. We, on the other hand, although we confess that even believers and the justified ought not rashly and securely to presume on the grace of God, and are afflicted often with various troubles and doubts, nevertheless teach out of the Scriptures that they both can and ought to strive for and by the help of the divine grace attain in this life that certitude in which the Holy Spirit witnesses with our Spirit that we are sons and heirs of God : and this testimony cannot be false, though not all who boast of the Spirit of God really have this testimony.^b

17. Finally we teach indeed that not all men are elect, and that those who are elected are elected not out of a foreseen merit of works or a foreseen disposition to faith in them, or assent of will, but out of mere grace in Christ;^c and that moreover the number of the elect and of the saved is certain with God.^d

18. Meanwhile we affirm that an opinion alien to our thought is attributed to us by those who accuse us, as if we held that eternal election and reprobation is made absolutely, without any respect to faith or unbelief, or to good or evil works : whereas on the contrary we rather hold that—in election faith and obedience are foreseen in those to be elected, not indeed as cause or reason of their election, but certainly as means of salvation foreordained in them by God ;^e in reprobation on the other hand, not only original sin, but also, so far as adults are concerned, unbelief and contumacious impenitence are not, properly speaking, foreordained by God, but foreseen and permitted in the reprobates themselves as the meritorious cause of desertion and damnation, and reprobated by the justest of judgments.^f

Accordingly on this sublime mystery of predestination, we clearly hold the same opinion which in the first instance Augustine of old asserted out of the Scriptures against Pelagius ; and which the greatest doctors of the Roman Church themselves, especially the followers of Thomas Aquinas, retain to-day.

FIRST GENEVAN CONFESSON (1536).*

X. *All are Good by the Grace of God.*—And finally that all the praise and glory may be rendered to God (as is due), and that we may be able to have true peace and quiet in our consciences, we acknowledge and confess that we receive all the blessings now recited from the mercy of God alone, without

* Probably composed by Farel, though possibly with the help of Calvin (*Op.*, Bruns. ed., ix). There is no Article on Predestination : but all the glory of salvation is ascribed to God.

^b *West. Conf.*, III, viii.

^c *West. Conf.*, III, v, a and b.

^d *West. Conf.*, III, iv.

^e *West. Conf.*, III, vi.

^f *West. Conf.*, III, vii.

any consideration of our worthiness or the merit of our works, to which is due no return except eternal confusion ; that, nevertheless, our Lord, having received us in His goodness into communion with His Son Jesus, has works which make us pleasant and acceptable with faith—not at all because they merit it, but only because, not imputing to us the imperfection that is in them. He sees in them nothing except what proceeds from His Spirit.

GENEVAN CONFESION (1537).*

The Apprehension of Christ by Faith.—As the merciful Father offers us His Son in the Word of the Gospel, so we embrace Him by faith and recognize Him as given to us. Without doubt the word of the Gospel calls all into participation of Christ, but multitudes, blinded and hardened by unbelief, reject this singular grace. Believers only, therefore, enjoy Christ, and they receive Him as sent to them, and do not reject Him as given to them : and follow Him as called by Him.

Election and Predestination.—In such a difference it is necessary to consider the great secret of the counsel of God : for the seed of God's word takes root and fructifies in those alone whom the Lord, by His eternal election, has predestined to be His children and heirs of the heavenly kingdom.^s To all others, who are reprobated by the same counsel of God before the constitution of the world,^t the clear and evident publication of truth can be nothing else but the savor of death unto death. Now the reason why the Lord shows mercy towards the ones and exercises the rigor of His judgment towards the others must be left to be known by Him alone ; the which He has willed should be concealed from us and not without very good reason. For neither would the rudeness of our minds permit us to endure so much clarity, nor our littleness permit us to understand so much wisdom. And in fact all who seek to raise themselves to it and are unwilling to repress the temerity of their spirits, experience the truth of what Solomon says (Provs. xxv.)—that he who would search into God's majesty will be oppressed by His glory. Let us only be assured of this—that the dispensation of the Lord, although it is concealed from us, is nevertheless holy and just : for had He willed to destroy the whole human race He had the right to do it, and in those whom it withdraws from perdition, we can contemplate nothing but His sovereign goodness.^u Therefore, let us recognize the elect to be vessels of His mercy (as they truly are), and the reprobates to be vessels of His wrath, which nevertheless is only just.^v Let us take from the one and the other alike ground and matter for the proclamation of His glory. And on the other hand also let us not, in order to confirm the certitude of our faith, seek (as many are accustomed to do) to penetrate into the heavens and to search out what God has from eternity determined to do concerning us (which cogitation can only agitate us with miserable anxiety and perturbation) : but let us be content with the testimony by which He has sufficiently and amply confirmed this certitude to us.^w For as in Christ all those are chosen who have been foreordained to life before the foundations of the world were laid, so He is presented to us as the seal of our election if we receive and embrace Him by faith. For what is it that we seek in election except that we may participate in eternal life ? And this we have in Christ : for from the beginning He has the life, and He is proposed to us for life, to the end that all who believe in Him shall have eternal life. Since then in possessing Christ by faith we possess also life in Him we have no need to search further into the counsel of God ; for Christ is not only a mirror in which the will of God

* From the French text.

^s West. Conf., III, v.

^t West. Conf., III, iii.

^u West. Conf., III, v.

^j West. Conf., III, v, vi, vii.

^x West. Conf., III, viii.

is represented to us, but also a pledge by which it is as it were sealed and confirmed to us.¹

GENEVAN CATECHISM (1545).*

Q. But why do you call God [in the Apostles' Creed] " *Creator*," when to preserve and conserve the creatures in their condition is much more grand than once to have created them?

A. It is certainly not intended by this particular that God has so once created His works that afterwards He has laid aside care for them. But rather it is so to be understood as that the world, as it was once created by Him, so now is conserved by Him; and that neither the world nor anything else stands except so far as it is sustained by His power and, as it were, His hand. Moreover, since He thus has all things in His hands, He is constituted therby the Supreme Governor and Lord of all. Therefore, from His being the Creator of heaven and earth, it is proper to gather that He it is alone who, in His wisdom, kindness, power, rules the whole course and order of nature; who is the author at once of drought, of hail and other storms, and as well of the calm; who in His goodness fertilizes the earth and again makes it barren by withdrawing His hand; from whom proceed both health and sickness; to whose empire, in fine, all things are subject and whose nod they obey..

Q. What are we to think, however, of the godless and of devils—shall we say that they, too, are subject to Him?

A. Though He does not govern them by His Spirit, He nevertheless coerces them by His power as by a bit, so that they are not even able to move, except so far as He permits to them. He makes them also the ministers of His will, so that they are compelled, unwillingly and against their counsel, to execute what has seemed good to Him.^m

Q. What good do you derive from the knowledge of this?

A. Very much. For it would go ill with us if anything was permitted to the devils and godless men apart from the will of God; and therefore we should never be of peaceful minds if we thought ourselves exposed to their license. But we may rest in peace now that we know that they are governed by the will of God and are held as it were in bounds, so as to be capable of nothing except by His permission: especially since God Himself undertakes to be our Tutor and the Captain of our salvation. . . .

Q. What is the " *Church* "?

A. The body and society of believers whom God has predestinated to eternal life.ⁿ

Q. Is it necessary to believe this head [of the Creed]?

A. Assuredly: unless we wish to make Christ's death otiose and to bring to naught all that has been heretofore set forth. For the one issue of it all is that there may be a Church. . . .

Q. Well, then, in what sense do you call the Church " holy? "

A. Because, to wit, whomsoever God has elected, them He justifies and builds up in holiness and innocence of life; by which His glory shines forth in them (Rom. viii. 20).ⁿ And it is this that Paul means when he admonishes us that Christ has sanctified the Church which He has redeemed so that it may be glorious and free from every spot (Eph. v. 25). . . .

Q. But may not this Church be otherwise known than simply believed in by faith?

A. There is certainly also a *visible* Church of God, which is marked out for us by certain notes and signs; but here we properly treat of the congregation of those

* From the text in Niemeyer.

¹ *West. Conf.*, III, viii.

^m *West. Conf.*, I, i, a.

ⁿ *West. Conf.*, I, iii, a.

ⁿ *West. Conf.*, III, vi, b.

whom He has adopted unto salvation by His hidden election. And that is not constantly perceptible to the eyes nor recognizable by signs.

CONSENSUS TIGURINUS (1549).*

XVI. [Not all who participate in a sacrament partake also in the reality.] Moreover we sedulously teach that God does not exert His power promiscuously in all who receive the sacraments, but only in the elect. For just as He enlightens unto faith no others than those whom He has foreordained to life, so by the hidden power of His Spirit He brings it about that the elect receive what is offered in the sacraments.*

[*Calvin's Exposition of the Heads of the Consensus.*]

What we say about its not being all promiscuously, but only the elect to whom has come the inner and efficacious operation of the Spirit, that profit by the sacraments, is too clear to need a long discussion. For if any one wishes the effect to be common to all, apart from the passages of Scripture which refute that view, experience itself sets it aside. Therefore, as the external voice in itself by no means penetrates the heart of man, but out of many auditors only those come to Christ who are drawn inwardly by the Father: according to the saying of Isaiah, that no others believed his preaching except those to whom the grace of the Lord is revealed: so it lies in the free and gracious will of the same God to give to whom He will to profit by the use of signs. But we do not in so speaking mean that anything of the nature of the sacraments is changed, but that their integrity remains to them. For Augustine, when he restricted the effects of the Holy Supper to the body of the Church, *i.e.*, to the predestinated who are already in part justified, and now being justified and yet to be glorified, did not evacuate or diminish its power, considered in itself alone, with respect to the reprobate; but only denied that the fruit of it is equally common to all. But since there is no obstacle in the way of the reception of Christ by the reprobates except their own unbelief, the whole fault also resides in them. In fine, the representation of the sign is unavailing to no one, except him who wilfully and malignantly deprives himself. For it is very true that each receives from the signs only so much fruit as the vessel of his faith will hold. And we justly repudiate that Sorbonne's invention that the sacraments of the new law profit all who do not interpose the obstacle of a mortal sin. For it is clearly an insipid superstition to attribute to them a virtue which the merely external use of them conveys, like a canal, into the soul. And if faith must needs intervene as a means, no sane man will deny that the same God who takes away our weakness by His succor, also gives the faith which, borne up by suitable supports, mounts to Christ and becomes possessed of His favors. And beyond all controversy this certainly must needs be—that as it does not suffice for the sun to shine and to send down its rays from heaven unless first eyes are given us to enjoy its light, so the Lord will vainly shine in His eternal signs unless He makes us seeing. Yea, as the heat of the sun, which in the living and breathing body gives life, in the corpse begets a foul odor, so the sacraments, when the spirit of faith is not present, are certain to breathe a mortifying rather than a vitalizing odor.

CONSENSUS GENEVENSIS (1552).†

The consent of the pastors of the Church of Geneva concerning the eternal Predestination of God, by which He has chosen from men some to salvation and has

* From the text in Niemeyer.

† The Consensus Genevensis is written, not in compressed form, but in a diffuse and argumentative style and occupies nearly one hundred octavo pages in Niemeyer's *Collectio Confessionum* (pp. 218-310). Nothing will be attempted here beyond presenting a few extracts, which it is hoped will give the substance of its teaching.

• *West. Conf.*, III, vi, b.

left others to their own destruction :^a likewise concerning the Providence by which He governs human things: set forth by John Calvin (*Title*).

The free election of God, by which He adopts to Himself out of the lost and condemned race of men whom He will, has been taught by us here not less reverently and soberly than sincerely and without dissimulation, and has been peacefully received by the people (218). . . . And the subject is worthy of receiving the most studious attention of the children of God, that they may not be ignorant of the origin of their heavenly birth. For there are some who would foolishly blot out the election of God because the Gospel is called the power of God to every one that believes. And yet it should have come into their mind whence faith arises. The Scriptures certainly everywhere proclaim that God gives His Son those who were His own ; that He calls those whom He had chosen ; and that it is those whom He has adopted to Himself as sons that He regenerates by His Spirit : in fine, that those who believe are the men whom He has taught inwardly, and to whom His power has been revealed. Wherefore whoever holds that faith is the earnest and pledge of free adoption will confess that it flows from the eternal fountain of Divine election. Nevertheless it is not from the secret counsel of God that the knowledge of salvation is to be sought by us. Life is set before us in Christ, who not only reveals Himself, but offers Himself to be enjoyed, in the Gospel. Upon this mirror let the gaze of faith be fixed ; and let it not desire to penetrate whither access is not open^b (219). . . . As to the providence of God by which the world is ruled, this ought to be settled and confessed among all the godly—that there is no reason why men should ascribe to God a share in their sins or involve Him in any way with them in bearing the blame :^c but whereas the Scriptures teach that the reprobate are also instruments of God's wrath, whom He partly makes teachers of patience to the faithful, and partly inflicts such punishments on as they deserve, this profane trifler contends that nothing is done righteously by God unless the reason for it lies plainly before our eyes. For taking away all discrimination between remote and proximate causes, he will not suffer the afflictions laid on holy Job to be thought the work of God, lest He should be made equally guilty with the Devil and with the Chaldean and Sabaean plunderers (220). (*Dedicatory Address to the Syndics and Senate of Geneva.*)

. . . Albert Pighius has endeavored . . . in the same book to establish the free will of man and to overturn the secret counsel of God by which He elects some to salvation and destines others to eternal destruction^d (221). . . . Both [Pighius and Georgius] imagine that it is placed within our freedom for each of us to introduce himself into the grace of adoption : and that it does not depend on the counsel of God who are elect or reprobate,^d but each determines by his own will either fortune for himself : that some believe the Gospel, others remain unbelieving—that this discrimination does not arise out of the free election of God, or out of His secret counsel, but only out of the individual will of each. . . . [Pighius] further pronounces all those to think unworthily concerning God, and to attribute to Him a rigor alien to His justice and goodness, who teach that some are positively and absolutely (præcise et absolute) elected, others destined to destruction^e (222). . . . It is the figment of Georgius that there has been no predestination to salvation of this or that one,^f but God has determined a time in which He would save the whole world. . . . Thus he slips away confidently, as if it were plainly established by no Scriptural passage that some have been elected by God to salvation with the preterition of the rest (222-3).^f . . . What is thought by us the *Institutes* sufficiently fully testify, though I should add nothing further. At the outset I would beg my readers to bear in mind what I there

^a *West. Conf.*, III, 3.

^d *West. Conf.*, III, 3.

^b *West. Conf.*, III, 8.

^e *West. Conf.*, III, 4.

^c *West. Conf.*, III, 1 b.

^f *West. Conf.*, III, 3.

suggest:—That this subject is not, as it wrongly seems to some, a wordy and thorny speculation which fruitlessly wearies the mind, but a discussion solid and eminently adapted to the advancement of godliness, because it admirably builds up faith, and trains us to humility, and rouses us to admiration of the immense goodness of God toward us and excites us to its praise. For there is no means better adapted to build up faith than hearing that that election which the Spirit of God seals upon our hearts stands in the eternal and immutable good pleasure of God, and cannot therefore be the prey of any earthly storms, of any Satanic assaults, of any vacillation of the flesh.^s For our salvation is at length made sure to us when we find its cause in the bosom of God. For thus in apprehending by faith the life manifested in Christ it is permitted to see far off, under the guidance of the same faith, from what fountain that life proceeded. Our assurance of salvation is founded in Christ, and rests on the promises of the Gospel. But this is no weak support, when now we hear that that we believe in Christ is a Divine gift to us; because we were both ordained before the beginning of the world to faith and elected to the inheritance of eternal life. Hence that inexpugnable security—because the Father who gave us to His Son as a peculiar possession is stronger than all and will not suffer us to be plucked out of His hand (223). . . . Let those clamor who will: we shall ever set forth the praise of the doctrine we teach of the free election of God, because except through it believers will never sufficiently understand how great the goodness of God has been towards them when they were effectually called to salvation. . . . If we are not ashamed of the Gospel, what is openly set forth in it we must needs confess—that, to wit, God by His eternal good pleasure, which hangs on no other cause, destined to salvation those whom it seemed good to Himself, with the rejection of the rest,^h and that those whom He blessed with this gratuitous adoption He illuminates by His Spirit that they may receive the life offered in Christ; while the rest are so willingly unbelievers that they remain in darkness, destitute of the light of faith (224). . . . But in a matter so difficult and recondite nothing is better than to be soberly discreet. Who denies it? But it is likewise to be looked to that it shall be the best kind of sobriety. . . . Is this a Christian simplicity—to avoid as noxious what God makes known? Of this, they say, we may be ignorant without loss. As if our heavenly Teacher were not the best judge of what and how much it were well to know (226). . . .

And that none might attribute it to faith that one is preferred to another he [Augustine] affirms that those are not chosen who have believed: but rather that they may believe. . . . Again, in another place (*Ad Bonif.*, ep. 106): “Who created the reprobate except God? And why except because he would? Why did he will it? Who art thou, O man, who repliest against God?” . . . But as, in tracing the beginning of election from the free will of God, he establishes reprobation in His mere will, so he teaches that the surety of our salvation also is founded in nothing else (228).ⁱ . . .

The salvation of believers hangs on the eternal election of God, of which no cause can be adduced except His gratuitous good pleasure.^j . . . There is certainly a mutual relation between the elect and reprobate, so that election . . . cannot stand unless we confess that God segregated definite men, whoever it seemed good to Him, from others. And this is expressed by the word Predestinating.^j . . . But to make faith the cause of election is altogether absurd.^k . . . “Paul asserts [says Augustine] that it is the fruit of divine election and its effect that we begin to be holy. They then act very preposterously who subordinate election to faith.”^k . . . And Paul again confesses

^s *West. Conf.*, III, 8.

^j *West. Conf.*, III, 4.

^h *West. Conf.*, III, 3.

^k *West. Conf.*, III, 5.

ⁱ *West. Conf.*, III, 5.

that God was moved by nothing extrinsic, but Himself was to Himself the author and cause, when He chose those as yet not created to confer on them afterward faith : " According to His purpose," says he, " who worketh all things according to the counsel of His will " (231).^k . . . Now, when He pronounces that He will cast out none from their number, but rather life is kept in security for all, until He shall raise them up at the last day, who does not see that final (as it is commonly called) perseverance is similarly ascribed to the election of God ? It can happen that some fall away from faith ; but those who have been given to Him by the Father, Christ asserts to be beyond the danger of destruction. . . . Neither should it be lightly passed by that He makes God more powerful than all adversaries whatever, that our certainty of salvation may not be less than our reverence for the power of God. Hence, amidst such violent assaults, such various dangers, so many tempests and storms, the perpetuity of our condition stands nevertheless in this—that God will constantly preserve by the power of His arm what He has decreed in Himself concerning our salvation^l (235). . . .

[Pighius'] last admonition is, That nothing be admitted alien to God's infinite goodness, and by which odium rather than love would be awakened towards Him. And so he drives with full sail against God, if from their creation He destines any to destruction. Nevertheless, even if this whole doctrine should be suppressed, occasion would nevertheless never be lacking to the reprobate for either holding God in hatred or assailing Him with their sacrileges. . . . Now let those who can bear to be taught in God's school not refuse to hear with me what Paul declares plainly and with no ambiguities. He places before us the two sons of Isaac who, though both were begotten in the sacred house, almost the very temple of God, were nevertheless separated to dissimilar lots by God's oracle. The cause of this discrimination, which might otherwise have been sought in the deserts of each, he assigns to the hidden counsel of God, " That the purpose of God might stand." We hear it established by God that of the two twins He should elect one only. . . . Since Paul commends grace for this very thing, that by the rejection of the other, one was chosen, certainly what Pighius has fabricated of a universal grace falls. Paul does not simply teach that in order that election might stand Jacob was appointed heir of life, but that his brother was rejected and the right of primogeniture conferred on him.^m It does not escape me here what some other dogs bark out, what also the ignorant mutter—that the passages cited by Paul do not treat either of eternal life or of eternal destruction. If these men, however, held the true principles of theology which ought to be trite to all Christians, they would have spoken a little more modestly. . . . The objection is that this is to be referred to the land of Canaan; and it is of this that Malachi spoke. And this would be worth listening to if God were fattening the Jews in the land of Canaan like pigs in a sty. But the meaning of the prophet is very different. For God had promised that land to Abraham as an outer symbol of a better inheritance. . . . In a word [the prophet] holds the land of Canaan as the sacred habitation of God. . . . (237-238) . . . Add that if God foresees anything in His elect, by which He discriminates them from the reprobate,ⁿ Paul's argument would have been meaningless, that it was when the brothers were not yet born that it was said, of Him that calleth and not of works, The older shall serve the younger. . . . And since Paul assumes as confessed what is incredible to these good theologians, " that," namely, " all are equally unworthy, the corruption of nature is alike in all," he serenely concludes thence that it is by His own free counsel that God elects whomsoever He has elected, and not those whom He fore-

^k *West. Conf.*, III, 5.

^l *West. Conf.*, III, 6.

^m *West Conf.*, III, 3, 7.

ⁿ *West. Conf.*, III, 5.

saw would be obedient children to him.^a In a word, Paul is considering what the nature of man would be without God's election; these men are dreaming of God's foresight of what would never have been in man until He made it (239). . . . If Pighius commends the patience of God, I assert: Nevertheless in the meanwhile this remains settled—that the reprobate are separated out by the counsel of God for this end—that He may show forth His power in them.^b And that that is not at all different from the meaning of Paul is apparent from his next illation: "Whom He will He hardens." . . . Yet the Scripture is looking especially at the beginning of the thing with which it is dealing so as to ascribe it to God only (241–242). . . . It is to be held, therefore, that the meaning of Paul (Rom. ix. 21) is: That God the maker of men forms out of the same lump that is taken in hand to honor or to dishonor, according to His will; since He has elected some, not yet born, gratuitously to life, leaving others to their own destruction, seeing that all are obnoxious to it by nature.^c For while Pighius denies any relation of the election of grace with hatred of the reprobate, I confess this really to exist, so that to the free love in which the elect are embraced, there corresponds in equal and common relation a just severity toward the reprobate (*in causa pari et commune*) (245).^d . . . In what sense the Hebrews speak of "vessels" or "instruments," no one who is moderately instructed in the Scriptures will be ignorant. When we hear of "instruments," then God must needs go before as the head and author of the whole, then His hand is the director. But why are they called vessels of wrath, except because He exercises toward them the just severity from which He abstains with reference to others?^e And why were they made vessels of wrath? Paul answers, In order that God might show His wrath and power in them.^f He says, "Prepared for destruction;" whence and how, except from their first origin and by nature?—since certainly the nature of the whole human race was vitiated in the person of Adam: not that the higher counsel of God did not precede: but because from this fountain flowed the curse of God and the destruction of the human race. For it is testified that God prepared the vessels of mercy for glory. If this is special to the elect, it is certain that the rest were fitted for destruction, because to be left to their own nature was to be devoted to certain destruction. For the nonsense of some, "That they were fitted by their own proper wickedness," is so absurd as not to deserve notice. It is certainly true that the reprobate procure to themselves the wrath of God by their depravity, and collect it on their heads with daily acceleration. But that here a discrimination which proceeds from the hidden judgment of God is dealt with by Paul is confessed. He says also, "The riches of God's grace are manifested," while on the other hand "vessels of wrath" rush to destruction. Here certainly we do not hear of what Pighius prates of—"That grace is equal to all;" but that the goodness of God is better illustrated, because He endures vessels of wrath and suffers them to come to their own end (246). . . . Neither otherwise can that inviolable covenant of God stand: "I am a jealous God, showing mercy to a thousand generations; a severe avenger to the third and fourth generation," than by the Lord's decreeing by His own will to whom He will grant His grace and whom He wills to remain devoted to eternal death.^g . . . Here certainly a distinction is made among men: and it is not made on the ground of the merits of each, but on the ground of the covenant made with the fathers (246). . . . The truth of that saying of Augustine (*de prædestinad. sanct.*, I, 2) is apparent, "Those are converted whom He Himself has wished to be converted,

^a *West. Conf.*, III, 5.^a *West. Conf.*, III, 7.^b *West. Conf.*, III, 7.^b *West. Conf.*, III, 3.^c *West. Conf.*, III, 3, 7.

and these He not only from unwilling makes willing, but also from wolves sheep, from persecutors martyrs, reforming them by His mighty grace." If man's wickedness be set in opposition, it would be more mighty than the grace of God, if the affirmation should not be true, "He will have mercy on whom He has mercy." And Paul's interpretation leaves no doubt. For after saying (Rom., xi. 7) that the election of God was fixed, he adds, "The rest were blinded, that the prophecy might be fulfilled." I concede that the blinding was voluntary and I ascribe it gladly to their own fault (Augustine, *de bono persev.*, 12). But I hear who they are that Paul excepts,—to wit, those whom it seemed good to the Lord to choose. Why, however, did He choose these rather than those? (248). . . . He accuses them, to be sure, as they deserve. But it is wrong and foolish for any to infer from this that the origin of their hardening lies in their own wickedness, as if there were no more occult cause of this very wickedness, viz., the corruption of nature; and as if, again, they did not remain sunk in this corruption for no other reason than because in the hidden counsel of God before they were born they were not destroyed as reprobates! (248). . . . This is the sum: If we admit the Spirit of God who spoke by the Apostles to be the interpreter of the Prophet, the hidden and incomprehensible judgment of God is to be adored in its blinding the greater part of men, lest "seeing they should see." Let there be a cessation here of all the reasonings that can come into our minds. For if we stick fast in man, this certainly will be first: That the Lord gives freely to those that seek: and the rest languish in their need, the remedy for which they do not ask. But unless what Augustine says comes to our aid—that it is due to the Divine goodness not only that it is opened to those that knock, but also that we knock and seek—it is not yet sufficiently known to us what the need is under which we labor. And if we come to the matter of help—experience evinces that that power of the Spirit by which is brought about what needs to be brought about is not free to all. Let no one deceive himself with empty flatteries. Those who come to Christ were already God's sons in His heart while they were yet in themselves enemies: and it was because they were foreordained to life that they were given to Christ (249). . . . It is not at all remarkable that Pighius should mix up everything so indiscriminately (to use his own word) in the judgments of God, when he does not discriminate between proximate and remote causes. Let men look around, hither, thither, they yet do not discover how to transfer the fault of their destruction: because its proximate cause resides in themselves. Even though they complain that the wound is inflicted on them from without, the interior apprehension of their mind will still hold them convinced that the evil had its origin in the voluntary defection of the first man. . . . If nothing then forbids either the first origin of ruin to have begun from Adam, or each of us to discern its proximate cause in himself, what stands in the way of the secret counsel of God, by which the fall of man was foreordained, being afar off adored by our faith with proper sobriety: while yet we behold as appears more closely the whole human race bound in the person of Adam to the guilt of eternal death and thus subjected to death? (252-253). . . . [Pighius] assaults that appearance of repugnancy (as it is called) in our opinion: that inasmuch as God decreed in Himself, before Adam's creation, what should happen to him and his posterity, the destruction of the reprobate ought not to be imputed to sin; because it would be absurd to make the effect prior to its own cause. But I affirm both of those things which Pighius attacks to be true. For so far as the dissidence between these two opinions which he pretends is concerned, there certainly is none. We say that man was created in such a state that he cannot complain of his Maker. God foresaw Adam's fall, and assuredly it

* *West. Conf.*, III, 6.

was not against His will that He suffered him to fall. What is gained by tergiversation here? Yet Pighius makes denial: "because the before-conceived counsel concerning the salvation of all remains stable." As if no solution was at hand: salvation was not destined for all, otherwise than if they should stand in their first condition. For no sane person will concede that there was a simple and absolute decree of God that all should attain to salvation. For it was sufficient for the just damnation of man that, when he was placed in the way of salvation, he voluntarily fell from it. Yet it could not be otherwise. What then? Is he thereby freed from fault, though the seat of it all was his own will? . . . The same also [as Augustine teaches] we too teach: that as we are all together lost in Adam, it is by the just judgment of God that those who perish, perish; and yet at the same time we confess that whatever loss befell Adam was divinely ordained (253-254). . . . So again the promises which incite all to salvation do not show simply and absolutely what God has determined in His hidden counsel, but what He is prepared to do for all who have been brought to faith and repentance. But thus a double will is attributed to God, who is so little variable that not even the least shadow is cast upon Him. What would it be but to mock men, Pighius asks, if God professes to will what He does not will? But if these two things be read in conjunction, as they ought to be, "I desire that the sinner should be converted and live"—that calumny is easily done away. God demands conversion of us: and whenever He finds it, the promised reward of life is bestowed. Therefore God is said to desire life along with repentance: and it is because He desires it that He invites all to it by His word. But that does not conflict with His hidden counsel, by which He has decreed to convert only His elect. Neither is it right to think him variable, because He, as Legislator, publishes to all the external doctrine of life. In this prior mode He calls all to life: but in that other mode He leads whom He will, as a father regenerating by His spirit, his children alone (256-257). . . . Neither, assuredly, do I send men off to the hidden election of God that they may look open-mouthed for salvation thence: but I exhort them to flee straight to Christ in whom the salvation is set forth for us which otherwise would have lain hidden in God. For whosoever does not walk in the lowly path of faith—to him the election of God is nothing but a deadly labyrinth. Therefore that the remission of our sins may be assured to us, that our consciousness may rest in confidence of eternal life, that we may boldly call upon God as Father, our beginning is not at all to be made from God's determination concerning us before the creation of the world; but from the revelation of His fatherly love to us in Christ and Christ's daily preaching to us by the Gospel. There is nothing higher to be sought by us than that we should be God's children. But the mirror of free adoption, in which alone we attain so great a good—its pledge and earnest—is the Son, who came forth to us from the Father's bosom, in order that He might ingraft us into His body and so make us heirs of the heavenly kingdom (261). . . . This then is the way in which God governs His own; this the manner in which He completes the work of His grace in them. But for why He takes them by the hand, there is another higher cause: it is His eternal purpose by which He has destined them to life (262).^t . . . But as Christ will recompense to the elect the reward of righteousness, so I by no means deny that what will then be visited on the reprobate will be the penalties of their own impiety and iniquities. Neither will it be possible to elicit from our doctrine that God by His eternal counsel chose to life whom it seemed good to Him and left the others to destruction;^u any such thing as that there are no penalties established for evil works and no reward set for good. We shall all stand before the tribunal of Christ, that each may receive according to what he has done in his body, whether good or bad. But whence comes

^t *West. Conf.*, III, 6.

^u *West. Conf.*, III, 3.

the righteousness and holiness which shall then receive the crown, except from the regeneration unto newness of life which God works in them by His Spirit? And whence the gift of regeneration but from free adoption? But the fault of our damnation resides so in ourselves that it is improper to bring alien colors to obliterate it. . . . How preposterously Pighius takes away the remote by throwing forward the proximate cause! (263) The Sorbonnic Sophists prate of an ordinary will of God and another absolute one. This blasphemy, from which pious ears justly recoil, would seem plausible to Pighius and his like. But I contend on the contrary that there is so little anything inordinate in God, that there rather flows from Him whatever there is of order in the heavens and the earth. Though then we do carry forward the will of God to the supremest degree, so that it is superior to all reason, far be it from us to imagine that He wills anything except with the highest reason: we believe in all simplicity that He has in His own right so much power that it behooves us to be content with His nod alone. . . . [But] did ever this monstrosity come into my mind, that God had no reason for His counsel? As I hold God to be the Ruler of the whole world, who governs and directs all things by His incomprehensible and wonderful counsel, how can any one gather from my words that He is carried hither and thither by chance, or does what He does in blind rashness? The Lord has, as the reason for all His works, His own glory (264-5). . . . There is another objection of the same nature: I deny that the elect are distinguished from the reprobate through any respect to their own deserts, since the grace of God makes, not finds, them worthy of adoption, as Augustine often says.^v Elsewhere I deny that any injustice is done to the reprobate, since they deserve to perish. Here Pighius tumultuously vaunts himself with outspread wings: I do not, it seems, understand myself or remember what I have already said. I am so far from thinking it necessary to expend many words in my defense that it irks me to advert to it even briefly. That God prefers some to others and chooses some while passing by others—this discrimination does not hang on the worthiness or unworthiness of men.^w Therefore it is wrong to say that those are reprobated who are worthy of eternal destruction. Although, however, in the former case there is no comparison made between the persons, and the reward of life is not afforded to worthiness, in the second case, on the contrary, the same condition is not determined for all. Add that Augustine, when he had somewhere written: "That salvation fails for no one who is worthy of it," afterwards, in his *Retractationes*, so modifies this as to exclude works and to refer acceptable worthiness to the free vocation of God. But Pighius insists "That if it be true, as I teach, that those who perish are destined to death by the eternal decree of God, the reason of which is not apparent, then they are made, are not found, worthy of destruction." I reply that there are three things here to be considered: first, that the eternal predestination of God by which, before Adam fell, He decreed what was to be, with reference to the whole human race and with reference to each and every man, was fixed and determined;^x next, that Adam himself was sentenced to death on account of the desert of his fall; last, that the whole of his progeny was so condemned in his fallen and lost person, that God grants the honor of adoption to those whom He freely chooses from among them. No one of these have I imagined or fabricated. Neither is it my present concern to prove any of them—this I seem to myself already to have done. I need only relieve myself of Pighius' calumny, who proudly triumphs over me as ten times over vanquished—as if these things could not be conciliated in any way whatever. Whenever predestination is discussed I have always taught and teach still to-day.

^v *West. Conf.*, III, 5.^x *West. Conf.*, III, 1.^w *West. Conf.*, III., 3, 5, 7.

That the start must be taken from this—that all the reprobate are justly left in death, since they died and were condemned in Adam;^y that they justly perish, because they are by nature children of wrath ; and therefore no one can have against God any ground of complaint of too much rigor, since they bear their guilt included in themselves. And, when we come to speak of the first man, That he, though he was created perfect, fell of his own accord ; and thence it has come about that by his own fault destruction has fallen on him and his ; although, of course, Adam did not fall and destroy himself and his posterity without the knowledge and thus the ordination of God, yet that in no respect operates either for alleviating his fault or for implicating God in the crime. For we must always consider that he of his own accord deprived himself of the rectitude which he had received from God, that of his own accord he gave himself into servitude to sin and Satan, that of his own accord he precipitated himself into destruction. The sole excuse alleged is that he could not escape what was decreed by God. But a voluntary transgression is enough and more than enough for guilt. And neither is the secret counsel of God, but the unobstructed will of man, the proper and genuine cause of sin. The silly complaint of Medea is justly derided in the old poet. . . . When she is conscious of her perfidy and barbarous cruelty, when the shame of her impurity smites her, she absurdly turns to occasions far remote. . . . But as to God's having knowingly and willingly suffered man to fall, the reason may be hidden, it cannot be unjust. . . . I so say that He ordained it as not to allow that He was the proper author of it (207-8).^z . . . After Paul had taught that out of the lost mass God chose and reprobated whom it seemed good to Him, he so little set forth why and how he did it that he rather in the greatest awe broke forth into that cry : "Oh, the height !" (Rom. xi. 33)^{aa} . . . Although meanwhile I do not in the least disapprove of what Augustine says in the twelfth book of his *De Genesi ad Literam* (A, c. 4 to c. 8), when he is adjusting all to fear and reverence toward God ; yet the other part, that God chooses whom He will out of the condemned seed of Adam, and reprobates whom He will, as it is far better fitted to exercise faith, so is it more likely to produce better fruit (269).^{bb} . . . Assuredly as the stupidity and ingratitude of men who withdraw themselves from the help of God can never be sufficiently condemned, so is it an intolerable insult to Christ to say that the elect are saved by Him provided that they take good care of themselves : throwing thus an ambiguity over Christ's protection, which he affirms is inexpugnable to the Devil and all the machinations of hell. . . . If, then, eternal life is certain to all the elect, if no one can pluck them away, if they can be snatched away by no violence and by no assault, if their salvation stands in the invincible might of God, with what face does Pighius dare to break this fixed certitude ? (272) . . . If Pighius asks what is the source of my knowledge of my election—Christ is to me equal to a thousand witnesses ; for when we find ourselves in His body, our salvation rests in a secure and quiet position as if it were already placed in heaven (273).

[Georgius] thinks that he argues acutely when he says (Rom., viii. 32) : "Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. It is therefore necessary for those who would remove the reprobate from participation in Christ to place them outside of the world." Let us not now avail ourselves of the common solution—that "Christ suffered sufficiently for all, efficaciously for the elect alone." This great absurdity, by which the monk has obtained the plaudits of his companions, has no weight at all with me. Throughout what regions of the world soever the elect may be dispersed, John extends to them the expiation of Christ, completed by His death. There is nothing in this inconsistent

^y West. Conf., III, 7.

^z West. Conf., III, i, b.

^{aa} West. Conf., III, 7.

^{bb} West. Conf., III, 8.

with reprobates being mingled in the world with the elect. There is also no place for controversy with respect to Christ's having come to expiate the sins of the whole world (John v. 15). But at once this solution meets us: "That whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but have eternal life." For assuredly what we are now discussing is not what is the nature of Christ's power, or what its inherent value; but to whom He offers Himself to be enjoyed. And if possession stands in faith and faith flows from the Spirit of adoption, it follows that he only is enrolled in the number of God's children who is to be a sharer in Christ. Neither indeed does John the Evangelist set forth anything else as the office of Christ than by His death to gather together into one the children of God. Whence we conclude, that though a reconciliation is offered by Him for all, nevertheless the benefit of being gathered into the company of life belongs to the elect. But when I say that it is offered for all, I do not mean that that ambassage by which God reconciles the world to Himself (as Paul witnesses, 2 Cor., v. 18) extends to all: it is not even sealed, as is imagined, indifferently in the hearts of those to whom it does extend (285).^{cc}

For we do not fancy that the elect under the continuous direction of the Spirit keep a straight course: nay, we say that they often slip, wander, fall and are almost separated from the way of salvation. But because the protection of God by which they are defended is the most powerful of all things, it is impossible for them to fall into utter ruin (289). . . . We must confess that only those whom God illuminates by His Spirit believe; we must confess in fine that election only is the mother of faith (289).

When I have said that the providence of God is to be considered together with its means, this is the sense: If any one has carried aid to those in extremity of need, this is not a human deliverance, but a Divine one through the hand of man. The sun rises daily, but it is God that sends light on the world. The earth produces its fruits, but it is God that supplies the bread and into the bread instills strength for our nourishment. In a word, since the lower causes are accustomed, like a veil, to hide God from our sight, we should penetrate with the eye of faith higher, so as to discern the hand of God operating in His instruments (p. 298). . . . In the first place, we must perceive how the will of God is the cause of all things that take place in the world, while yet God is not the author of the evil things.^{dd} I will not say with Augustine what I nevertheless freely allow was truly said by him, that there is in sin or in evil nothing positive. For this is a subtlety which to many is not satisfying. I assume for myself, however, another principle: That things done by men wrongly and unrighteously are right and righteous works of God (299). . . . That God directs by His counsel things which seem especially fortuitous, the Scriptures plainly testify when they say, "The lot is cast into the lap, but the determination of the events comes from God" (Prov., xvi. 33). Similarly, if a branch broken from a tree or an axe slipping unintentionally from the hand of a man shall smite the head of a passer-by, Moses testifies (Deut., xix. 5) that God has done it purposely, because He wished the man to be killed. . . . But because the Stoic necessity appears to be established after this fashion, the doctrine is odious to many, even though they do not dare to condemn it as false. This was an ancient calumny, by which Augustine complains (Lib. 2 *ad Bonif.*, c. 5) that he was unjustly burdened: it ought now to be obsolete. It is certainly highly unworthy of men of probity and ingenuousness, who are adequately instructed. What the notion of the Stoics was is well known. They wove their fate out

^{cc} *West. Conf.*, III, 6, b.

^{dd} *West. Conf.*, III, 1, b.

of the Gordian knot of causes, in which, since they involved God Himself, they invented "golden chains," as the fables put it, by which they bound God and so subjected Him to the lower causes. . . . Let us leave the Stoics, then, to their fate; for us the free will of God is the governor of all things.^{ee} But to take contingency out of the world is clearly absurd. I omit the distinctions that are employed in the schools. What I set forth will in my judgment be simple and not at all strained, and also suited for the usage of life. What God has determined is in such a manner of necessity to come to pass that, nevertheless, it is not absolutely (*præcise*) and in its own nature (*suntuste natura*) a necessity, I have a familiar illustration in the bones of Christ. That Christ assumed a body in all things like to ours the Scriptures testify. Accordingly no sane person will hesitate to confess that His bones were breakable. But it appears to me another and separate question, Whether any bone of His could be broken. For that all should remain whole and uninjured must necessarily be because it was so determined in the fixed decree of God. I am not speaking thus, certainly, because I object to the received forms of speech, concerning *necessitas secundum quid* and *necessitas absoluta*, or concerning *necessitas consequentis* and *consequentialia*; but only that no subtleties may stand in the way of my readers—even the least cultivated ones—recognizing the truth of what I say. If, then, we consider the nature of Christ's bones, they were breakable; but if, on the other hand, that decree of God which was manifested in its own time, they are no more subject to breaking than the angels are to human sorrows. Accordingly, then, as it is proper for us to consider the divinely determined order of nature, I by no means reject contingency as respects our perception.^{ff} And we must keep in memory what I have already laid down, that when God exercises His power through means and lower causes, it is not to be separated from them. It is a drunken notion to say that God has decreed what shall be, and therefore it is superfluous to interpose our care and effort. On the contrary, since He prescribes to us what to do and wills that we shall be the instruments of His power, let us not deem it lawful for us to separate what He has joined together.^{ff}. . . . Therefore, so far as concerns the future, since the issues of things are as yet hidden from us, each one ought to be as intent on his duty as if nothing had been determined in any direction. Or to speak more properly, each of us ought so to hope for success in all that he undertakes at the command of God, that in the matters of which he is ignorant he conciliates contingency with the sure Providence of God. . . . In a word, as the Providence of God rightly understood does not tie our hands, so it not only does not impede prayer, but rather establishes it. . . . There is no exhortation more conducive to patience than our knowledge that nothing comes to pass fortuitously, but that that which has seemed good to God has taken place. Meanwhile, it does not follow that the fault of adverse things is not borne by our ignorance, or rashness, or thoughtlessness, or some other vice (299, 300). . . . The sum, however, comes to this—Although men wanton like beasts untamed and coerced by no bonds; they are, nevertheless, governed by a secret bit, so that they cannot move even a finger except for the accomplishment rather of God's than of their own work (301).^{gg} . . . And what Satan works is affirmed by the Scriptures to be the work of God in another aspect, inasmuch, that is, as God, by holding him bound to obedience to His providence, turns him whither He will, and thus applies his activity to His own uses (302). Considering these things honestly and soberly, there will be no doubt but that the supreme and especial cause of all things is the will of God (304).^{gg} . . . We should keep in mind indeed what I have before said: that God does nothing without the best reason: though since His will is the

^{ee} *West. Conf.*, III, 1.^{ff} *West. Conf.*, III, 1, b.^{ff} *West. Conf.*, III, 1, b.

surest rule of righteousness, it ought to be to us, so to speak, the chief reason of all reasons (305). . . . That Sorbonic doctrine, accordingly, in which the Papal theologians take such pride, which attributes *potentia absoluta* to God, I detest. For it would be easier to tear away the sun's light from its heat, or its own heat from the fire, than to separate God's power from His righteousness (305). . . .

Since then it is from a righteous cause, though one unknown to us, that there proceed from the Lord the things that men perpetrate in their wickedness—although His will is the first cause of all things, I deny nevertheless that He is the author of sin.^{hh} Assuredly that diversity of causes which I have posited is not to be permitted to fall into forgetfulness—that there is a proximate and also a remote cause—that we may understand how great the difference is between the signal Providence of God and turbulent impetuses of men. It is indeed to load us with a base and ungenerous calumny to argue that God is made the author of sin if His will is the cause of all that is done. For when a man acts unrighteously under the incitement of ambition or avarice or lust, or any other depraved affection, though God works by a righteous though hidden judgment through his hand, the name of sin cannot square with Him. Sin in man is constituted by perfidy, cruelty, pride, intemperance, envy, blind self-love, or some such depraved desire. Nothing of this kind is found in God. Shimei assaults his king with monstrous petulance. The sin is clear. God uses such a minister for the just humiliation of David, and thus castigates him with such a rod. Who will accuse Him of sin? The Arabs and Sabaeans make prey of the substance of others. The crime of robbery is manifest. By their violence God exercises the patience of His servant. Let there emerge from the affair the heroic confession, "Blessed be the name of the Lord," rather than profane revilings be heard. In fine, God's way of working in the sins of men is such that, when we come to Him, every spot is wiped away by His eternal purity (307). . . . There is no reason, therefore, why any one should drag God into participation in the sin, whenever any conjunction is apparent between His secret counsel and the open vice of men. Let there come to our minds continually that saying of Augustine: "Accordingly the works of God are great, exquisite in all His will, so that in a marvelous and ineffable fashion that is not done apart from His will which yet is done against His will, since it would not be done if He did not permit it: and He does not permit it unwillingly but willingly." And from this too is refuted (*Enchir. ad Laur.*, c. 100) the ignorance or else the wickedness of those who deny that the nature of God would be simple, if another will be attributed to Him besides that which is revealed by Him in the Law. Some also ask in derision, If there be any will in God which is not revealed in the Law by what name shall it be called? But those must be without understanding to whom the numerous Scriptural references which proclaim with marveling the profound abyss of God's judgments signify nothing. . . . The Scriptures are full of such examples. Shall we, therefore, impute the fault of the sins to God, or fabricate in Him a double will, so that He is at odds with Himself? But as I have already shown that He wills the same thing along with the wicked and profane but after a different manner; so we must now hold that He wills in the same manner things that are different in kind. . . . For the will by which He prescribes what shall be done and by which He avenges transgressions of His law is one and simple (308-9).

^{hh} *West. Conf.*, III, 1, b.

CALVIN'S ARTICLES ON PREDESTINATION.*

Before the first man was created God, by an eternal decree, determined what He willed should come to pass with reference to the whole human race.^a

By this hidden decree of God it was decided that Adam should fall from the perfect state of his nature and should draw all his posterity into the guilt of eternal death.^b

On the same decree hangs the discrimination between the elect and the reprobate: for some He has adopted to Himself to salvation; others He has destined to eternal destruction.^c

Although the reprobate are vessels of the just vengeance of God, and again the elect are vessels of mercy, nevertheless no other cause of the discrimination is to be sought in God than His mere will, which is the supreme rule of righteousness.^d

Although it is by faith that the elect obtain the grace of adoption, election nevertheless does not hang on faith, but is prior to it in time and in order.^e

Inasmuch as the origination and perseverance of faith flow from the gratuitous election of God, so none others are truly illuminated unto faith, neither are any others endued with the Spirit of regeneration except those whom God has chosen:^f but the reprobate must needs remain in their blindness or fall away from faith, if perchance there be any in them.^g

Although we are chosen in Christ, nevertheless that the Lord considers us among His own is prior in order to His making us members of Christ.^h

Although the will of God is the supreme and first cause of all things and God holds the Devil and all the impious subject to His will, God nevertheless cannot be called the cause of sin, nor the author of evil, neither is He open to any blame.ⁱ

Although God is truly hostile to sin and condemns all iniquity in men, because it is offensive to Him, nevertheless it is not merely by His bare permission, but by His will and secret decree that all things that are done by men are governed.

Although the Devil and reprobates are God's servants and instruments to carry out His secret decisions, nevertheless in an incomprehensible manner God so works in them and through them as to contract no stain from their vice, because their malice is used in a just and righteous way for a good end, although the manner of it is often hidden from us.^j

They act ignorantly and calumniously who say that God is made the author of sin, if all things come to pass by His will and ordinance; because they make no distinction between the open depravity of men and the hidden appointments of God.^k

GENEVAN STUDENT'S CONFESSION (1559).†

I confess also that God created not only the visible world, *i. e.*, the heavens and the earth and all that in them is, but also the invisible spirits, some of whom have continued in their obedience, while others by their own fault

* From the text in the Strassburg *Corpus* (*Op.*, Bruns. ed., ix). The date is not known.

† *Op.*, Bruns. ed., ix, 720.

^a *West. Conf.*, III, i and iii.

^b *West. Conf.*, III, i.

^c *West. Conf.*, III, iii.

^d *West. Conf.*, III, iii, v, vii.

^e *West. Conf.*, III, v, b.

^v *West. Conf.*, III, vi, c.

^w *West. Conf.*, III, v, vi.

^x *West. Conf.*, III, i.

^y *West. Conf.*, III, i, b.

^z *West. Conf.*, III, i, b.

have fallen into perdition : and that the perseverance which was in the angels came from the gratuitous election of God, who continued His love and goodness to them, giving them unchangeable constancy to persist ever in good.* Accordingly I detest the error of the Manichees who imagined that the Devil was evil by nature, and even had his origin and principle of himself.

I confess that God has so created the world as at the same time to be its perpetual Governor : so that nothing takes place or can occur except by His counsel and providence.^b And although the Devil and wicked men labor to throw everything into confusion, as do even the faithful by their sins, they cannot pervert the right order. I acknowledge that God, nevertheless, being the supreme Prince and Lord of all, turns the evil to good and disposes and directs all things, whatever they be, by a secret curb in a marvelous fashion, which it behooves us to adore in all humility, since we cannot comprehend it.^c . . .

I confess that we are made sharers in Jesus Christ and all His benefits by faith in the Gospel, when we are assured of a right certitude of the promises which are contained in it : and as this surpasses all our powers, that we are not able to attain it except by the Spirit of God ; and so, that it is a special gift, which is not communicated except to the elect, who have been predestinated before the creation of the world to the inheritance of salvation, without any regard to their worthiness or virtue.^d

CONFession FOR THE CHURCH AT PARIS (1557).*

We believe that it is of the mercy of God alone that the elect are delivered from the common perdition into which all men are plunged :* and first of all that Jesus Christ, without whom we are all lost, has been given to us as a redeemer, to bring us righteousness and salvation. . . . We believe that it is by faith only that we are made sharers in this righteousness, and also that we are illuminated unto faith by the secret grace of the Holy Spirit [seeing that we are elect in Jesus Christ],† so that it is a free and special gift which God grants to those whom it seems good to Him, and that not only to introduce them into the right path, but also to cause them to continue in it to the end.^b

CONFession FOR THE FRENCH CHURCHES, TO BE PRESENTED TO THE EMPEROR (1562).‡

Thence [from original sin], we conclude that the source and origin of our salvation is the pure mercy of God : for He cannot find in us any worthiness by which He might be led to love us. We also, being evil trees, are not able to bring forth good fruit, and thus we are not able to prevent God in acquisition or to merit favor in His sight : but He looks on us in pity to show us mercy and has no other occasion to exercise His compassion on us except our miseries.* Accordingly we hold that this kindness which He displays toward us proceeds solely from His having chosen us before the creation of the world, and we seek no reason for His having so done outside of Himself and His good pleasure.^b And here is our first foundation, that we are acceptable to God

* Brunswick ed. of *Op.*, ix, 717 *sq.*

† This clause is omitted in Bonnet's text (*Lettres de Calvin*, II, 131).

‡ *Op.*, Bruns. ed., ix, 753 *sq.*

^a *West. Conf.*, III, 3.

^a *West. Conf.*, III, 5.

^b *West. Conf.*, III, 1, a.

^b *West Conf.*, III, 6.

^c *West Conf.*, III, 1, b.

^a *West. Conf.*, III, 5.

^d *West. Conf.*, III, 5-6.

^b *West. Conf.*, III, 5-6.

because it has pleased Him to adopt us as His children before we were born, and thus He has by a singular privilege withdrawn us from the common curse into which all men are plunged.^b

But as the counsel of God is inaccessible, we confess that to obtain salvation we must needs come to the means which God has ordained : we are not of the number of those fantasists who, under the shadow of the eternal predestination of God, take no account of walking in the right path to the life that is promised us ; but above all things we hold that to be the avowed children of God, and to have the right certitude, we must needs believe in Jesus Christ, because it is in Him alone that we must needs seek the whole substance of our salvation.^c

THE FRENCH CONFESSTION (1559).*

viii. We believe that not only did He create all things, but that He governs and directs them, disposing and ordering, according to His will, all that which comes to pass in the world—not that He is the author of evil or that the guilt of it can be imputed to Him, seeing that His will is the sovereign and infallible rule of all right and justice ;^a but He has admirable means of so making use of devils and sinners that He knows how to turn to good the evil that they do, and of which they bear the blame.^a And thus, while we confess that nothing takes place without the providence of God, we humbly bow before the secrets that are hidden from us without enquiring beyond our measure ; but rather applying to our benefit what is revealed to us in Holy Scripture for our peace and safety : inasmuch as God, who has all things subject to Him, watches over us with a paternal care, so that not a hair of our head shall fall without His will.^b And yet He holds the devils and all our enemies in restraint so that they can do us no injury without His leave.

xii. We believe that out of this universal corruption and condemnation wherein all men are plunged God withdraws those whom, in His eternal and immutable counsel, He has chosen, of His own goodness and mercy alone, in our Lord Jesus Christ, without respect to their works,^c leaving the rest in this same corruption and condemnation to manifest in them His justice, as in the former He makes the riches of His mercy to shine forth.^d For the ones are not better than the others until God distinguishes them according to His immutable counsel, which He has determined in Christ Jesus before the creation of the world ; neither is it possible for any one to obtain that good for himself by his own strength, seeing that by nature we cannot have a single good motion, of either feeling or thought, until God has prevented us and disposed us to it.^e

THE BELGIC CONFESSTION (1561).†

Art. XIII. We believe that this good God, after He had created all things, did not abandon them to chance or fortune, but directs and governs them in such manner, according to His holy will, that nothing happens in this world without His appointment ;^a although nevertheless God is not the author of nor chargeable with the evil that occurs : for His power and goodness are so great and incomprehensible that He ordains and executes His work well and righte-

* From the text in Niemeyer.

^b West. Conf., III, 5-6.

^c West. Conf., III, 8.

^d West. Conf., III, 1, b.

^e West. Conf., III, 8.

^f West. Conf., III, 3 and 5.

† From the text in Niemeyer.

^a West. Conf., III, 3 and 7.

^b West. Conf., III, 3.

^c West. Conf., III, 5-6.

^d West. Conf., III, 1, a.

ously even when the devil and wicked men act unrighteously.^b And as to what He does surpassing human understanding, we will not curiously inquire into it farther than our capacity will admit of, but in all humility and reverence adore the righteous judgments of God which are hidden from us, contenting ourselves that we are disciples of Christ, to learn only when He reveals to us by His Word and not transgressing these limits.^c This doctrine affords us an unspeakable consolation, since we are taught by it that nothing can befall us by chance, but by the ordinance of our good heavenly Father, who watches in our behalf with a paternal care holding all His creatures subject to Him; so that not a hair of our head (for they are all numbered) nor even a sparrow can fall to the ground without the will of our Father. In whom we trust, knowing that He holds the devils in restraint, and all our enemies, and that they cannot injure us without His permission and good will.^d

Art. XVI. We believe that, the whole race of Adam being thus precipitated into perdition and ruin, by the sin of the first man, God hath manifested Himself such an one as He is, that is to say merciful and righteous: merciful in delivering and saving from this perdition those whom in His eternal and immutable counsel he has elected and chosen by His pure goodness, in Jesus Christ our Lord, without any regard to their works; righteous in leaving the rest in their ruin and fall wherein they have precipitated themselves.^a [* Thus He declares Himself a merciful and clement God to those whom He saves, since He owed them nothing; as likewise He declares Himself a righteous judge by the manifestation of His just severity towards the rest.^d Nor does He do the latter any injustice. For that He saves some is not because they are better than the rest, for all were sunk into certain ruin, and God distinguishes and frees them according to His eternal and immutable counsel which was established in Jesus Christ before the world was created.^d No one, then, according to this judgment, can attain to this glory of himself, since of ourselves we are not capable of thinking any good thing, unless God precedes us by His grace and mere goodness, so corrupt is our nature.]

CONFESION OF THE ENGLISH CONGREGATION AT GENEVA (1558).†

I believe and confesse my Lord God eternall, infinite, immeasurable and invisible. . . . who by his Almighty power and wisdome has not onlie of nothing created Heaven and Earth and all thinges therein conteined. . . . but also by his Fatherly Providence governeth, mainteineth and preserveth the same, according to the purpose of his will*. . . . I believe also and confesse Jesus Christ. . . . who giving us that by grace which was his by nature, made us through faith the children of God. . . . who. . . . will come in the same visible forme in which he ascended, with an unspeakable Magestie, power and companie, to separate the lambes from the goates, the elect from the reprobate, so that none, whether he be alive then, or dead before, shall escape his judgment. . . . yet notwithstanding it is not sufficient to believe that God is Omnipotent and mercifull, that Christ hath made satisfaction, or that the Holy Ghoste hath this power and effect, except we do apply the same benefits to ourselves, who are God's elect. I believe therefore and confess one holy Church. . . . which Church is not seene to man's eyes but only knowne to God, who of the lost sonnes of Adam hath ordeined some as vessels of wrath to damnation; and

* The remainder (in square brackets) is not found in the French, nor in the Latin of 1612: it is printed by Niemeyer from the Latin version of Festus Hommius, made in 1618.

† From the text in Dunlop.

^b *West. Conf.*, III, 1, b.

^c *West. Conf.*, III, 8.

^d *West. Conf.*, III (5-7).

^a *West. Conf.*, III, 1.

hath chosen others as vessels of his mercy to be saved,^b the which also in due time hee calleth to integrity of life and godly conversation, to make them a glorious Church to himselfe^c. . . . With full assurance that although this roote of sinne lie hid in us, yet to the elect it shall not be imputed. . . .

THE SCOTCH CONFESION (1560).*

Art. I. We confesse and acknowlede ane onelie God, to whom only we must cleave, whom onelie we must serve, whom onelie we must worship, and in whom onelie we put our trust. . . . Be whom we confesse and beleve all thingis in hevin and eirth, aswel Visible as Invisible, to have been created, to be reteined in their being, and to be ruled and guyded be his inscrutable Providence, to sik end, as his Eternall Wisdome, Gudnes, and Justice hes appoynted them, to the manifestatioun of his awin glorie^a. . . . Art. III. . . . deith everlasting hes had, and sall have power and dominiouen over all that have not been, ar not, or sal not be regenerate from above: quhilk regeneratioun is wrocht be the power of the holie Gost, working in the hartes of the elect of God, ane assured faith in the promise of God, reveiled to us in his word, be quhilk faith we apprehend Christ Jesus, with the graces and benefites promised in him^b. . . . Art. VII. We acknowlede and confesse, that this maist wonderous conjunction betwixt the God-head and the man-head in *Christ Jesus*, did proceed from the eternall and immutable decree of God, from quhilk al our salvatioun springs and depends.^c Art. VIII. For that same eternall God and Father, who of meere grace elected us in *Christ Jesus* his Sonne, befoir the foundatioun of the warlde was laide, appointed him to be our Head, our Brother, our Pastor, and great Bishop of our sauls^d. . . . And for this cause, ar we not affrayed to cal God our Father, not sa meikle because he hes created us, quhilk we have common with the reprobate; as for that, that he hes given to us his onely Sonne, to be our brother, and given unto us grace to acknowlede and imbrace him for our onlie Mediatour, as before is said. . . . Art. XIII. . . . the cause of gude warkis, we confesse to be not our free wil, bot the Spirit of the Lord *Jesus*, who dwelling in our hearts be trewe faith, bringis furth sik warkis, as God hes prepared for us to walke in^e. . . . For how soone that ever the Spirit of the Lord *Jesus*, quhilk God's elect children receive be trewe faith, taks possession in the heart of ony man, so soone dois he regenerate and renew the same man^f. . . . Art. XVI. As we beleve in ane God, Father, Sonne, and holy Ghaist; sa do we maist constantly beleeve, that from the beginning there hes bene, and now is, and to the end of the warlde sall be, ane Kirk, that is to say, ane company and multitude of men chosen of God, who richtly worship and imbrace him be trewe faith in *Christ Jesus*, quha is the only head of the same Kirk, quhilk alswa is the bodie and spouse of *Christ Jesus*, quhilk Kirk is catholike, that is, universal, because it conteiniſ the Elect of all ages, of all realmes, nations, and tongues.^e . . . This Kirk is invisible, knawen onelie to God, quha alane knawis whome he hes chosen; and comprehends as weill (as said is) the Elect that be departed, commonlie calld the *Kirk Triumphant*, and they that zit live and fecht against sinne and *Sathan* as sall live hereafter. Art. XVII. The Elect departed are in peace and rest fra their labours, . . . they are delivered fra all feare and torment, and all temptatioun, to quhilk we and all

* From the text in Schaff, iii. 439 sq.

^b West. Conf., III, 3.

^c West. Conf., III, 5.

^c West. Conf., III, b.

^d West. Conf., III, 6.

^a West. Conf., III., 1, a.

^e West Conf., III, 6.

^b West. Conf., III, 6.

^f West. Conf., III, 4.

Goddis Elect are subject in this life, and therfore do bear the name of the *Kirk Militant*: As contrariwise,^s the reprobate and unfaithfull departed have anguish, torment, and paine, that cannot be expressed.^t Art. XXV. Albeit that the Worde of God trewly preached, and the Sacraments richtlie ministred, and Discipline executed according to the Worde of God, be the certaine and infallible Signes of the trew Kirk, we meane not that everie particular persoun joyned with sik company, be ane elect member of *Christ Jesus*: For we acknowlede and confesse that Dornell, Cockell, and Caffe may be sawen, grow, and in great abundance lie in the middis of the Wheit, that is, the Reprobate may be joyned in the societie of the Elect, and may externally use with them the benefites of the worde and Sacraments. Bot sik as continew in weil doing to the end, bauldely professing the Lord *Jesus*, we constantly beleve, that they sall receive glorie, honor, and immortality, to reigne for ever in life everlasting with *Christ Jesus*, to whose glorified body all his Elect shall be made lyke, when he sall appeir againe in judgement.^u

CRAIG'S CATECHISM (1581.)*

- Q. What is the Church which we confesse here?
 A. The whole company of God's elect, called and sanctified.^v
 Q. Why is the Church only known to us by faith?
 A. Because it containeth only God's elect, which are known only to Himself.^w
 Q. When and how may we know them?
 A. When we see the fruits of election and holiness in them.^x
 Q. Out of what fountain doth this our stability flow?
 A. Out of God's eternal and constant election in Christ.^y
 Q. By what way cometh this election to us?
 A. By His effectual calling in due time.^z
 Q. What waketh this effectual calling in us?
 A. The obedience of faith.^a
 Q. May not this state be abolished through sin?
 A. No, for these gifts are without repentance.
 Q. But many fall shamefully from God.
 A. The Spirit of adoption raiseth up the chosen again.
 Q. But many are never raised again.
 A. These were never the chosen of God.
 Q. When should we begin our trial?
 A. At the fruits of faith and repentance. Because they are best known to ourselves and others.
 Q. What if we begin at election?
 A. Then we shall wander in darkness.^b

THE ENGLISH ARTICLES (1553).†

XVII. *Of Predestination and Election.*

Predestination to life, is the euerlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundacions of the worlde were laied) he hath constantlie decreed by his

* From Bonar's *Catechisms of the Scottish Reformation*.

† Taken from Hardwick's *History of the Articles of Religion*, etc., third edition, 1876, pp. 310 sq.

^s *West. Conf.*, III, 6.

^b *West. Conf.*, III, 4.

^t *West. Conf.*, III, 7.

^c *West. Conf.*, III, 8.

^u *West. Conf.*, III, 6.

^d *West. Conf.*, III, 6.

^v *West. Conf.*, III, 6.

^e *West. Conf.*, III, 8.

owne judgments secrete to vs, to deliuer from curse, and damnation those whom he hath chosen * out of mankinde, and to bring them to euerlasting salvation by Christ, as vesselles made to honour :^a whereupon, † soche as haue so excellent a benefite of GOD geuen unto theim ‡ be called, according to Goddes purpose, by his spirite, woorking in due seasone, thei through grace obeie the calling, thei be justified frely, thei be made sonnes § by adoptiōne, thei bee made like the image of Goddes ¶ oneley begotten sonne Jesu Christe, thei walke religiouse in goode woorkes, and at length by Goddes mercie, thei atteine to euerlasting felicitie.^b

As the Godlie consideration of predestination, and our election in Christe is ful of swete, pleasaunte, and vnspeakable coumfort to godlie persones, and soche as feele in themselues the woorking of the spirite of Christe, mortifying the workes of the flesh, and their earthlie membres, and drawing vp their minde to high and heauenly thinges, aswel because it doeth greatly stablish and confirme their faith of eternal saluation to be enioied through Christe, as because it doeth feruentlie kindle their loue towards Godde :^c So for curious, and carnall persones lacking the Spirite of Christ, to haue continuallie before their yies the sentence of Goddes predestination, is a moste daungerous dounefall, whereby the Deuill maie ¶ thrust them either into desperation, or into a rechielesnesse of most vncleane liuing, no lesse perilous than desperation.^d

Furthermore [although the Decrees of predestination are unknowne vnto us, yeat]^e we must receiue Goddes promises, in soche wise as thei bee generallie set foorth to vs in holie Scripture, and in our doinges that wille of Godde is to be folowed, whiche we haue expresslie declared vnto us in the woorde of Godde.

THE LAMBETH ARTICLES (1595).††

1. God from eternity hath predestinated some unto life, and reprobated some unto death.^a
2. The moving or efficient cause of predestination unto life is not the foresight of faith, or of perseverance, or of good works, or of anything that is in the persons predestinated, but the will of God's good pleasure alone.^b
3. There is a predefined and certain number of the predestinated, which can neither be increased nor diminished.^c
4. Those who are not predestinated to salvation shall necessarily be condemned for their sins.^d
5. A true, lively and justifying faith, and the sanctifying Spirit of God is not extinguished, falleth not away, vanisheth not in the elect, either finally or totally.^e
6. A man truly believing, that is endowed with justifying faith, is certain

* "in Christ" subsequently added (1563, 1571).

† "Wherefore" later.

‡ Altered later into: "they which be indued with so excellent a benefite of God."

§ "of God" added later.

¶ Later: "his."

|| Later: "doth."

** Subsequently omitted (1563, 1571).

†† From the Latin text in Hardwick, p. 363.

^a West. Conf., III, 5.

^b West. Conf., III, 5, b.

^c West. Conf., III, 6, b.

^d West. Conf., III, 4.

^e West. Conf., III, 8.

^f West. Conf., III, 7.

^g West. Conf., III, 3.

^h West. Conf., III, 6.

with the assurance of faith, of the forgiveness of his sins and his everlasting salvation by Christ.^a

7. Saving grace is not given, is not communicated, is not granted to all men, whereby they may be saved if they will.^b

8. No one can come unto Christ unless it be given unto him and unless the Father draw him. And all men are not drawn by the Father that they may come unto the Son.

9. It is not placed within the will and power of every man to be saved.

THE IRISH ARTICLES (1615).*

Of God's Eternal Decree and Predestination.

(11). God from all eternity did, by his unchangeable counsel, ordain whatsoever in time should come to pass ;^c yet so, as thereby no violence is offered to the wills of the reasonable creatures, and neither the liberty nor the contingency of the second causes is taken away, but established rather.^d

(12). By the same eternal counsel God hath predestinated some unto life, and reprobated some unto death :^e of both which there is a certain number, known only to God, which can neither be increased nor diminished.^f

(13). Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God whereby, before the foundations of the world were laid, he hath constantly decreed in his secret counsel to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ unto everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honor.^g

(14). The cause moving God to predestinate unto life, is not the foreseeing of faith, or perseverance, or good works, or of anything which is in the person predestinated, but only the good pleasure of God himself.^h For all things being ordained for the manifestation of his glory, and his glory being to appear both in the works of his mercy and of his justice, it seemed good to his heavenly wisdom to choose out a certain number toward whom he would extend his undeserved mercy, leaving the rest to be spectacles of his justice.ⁱ

(15). Such as are predestinated unto life be called according unto God's purpose (his spirit working in due season), and through grace they obey the calling, they be justified freely ; they be made sons of God by adoption ; they be made like the image of his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ ; they walk religiously in good works ; and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity.^j But such as are not predestinated to salvation shall finally be condemned for their sins.^k

(16). The godlike consideration of predestination and our election in Christ is full of sweet, pleasant and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh and their earthly members, and drawing up their minds to high and heavenly things : as well because it doth greatly confirm and establish their faith of eternal salvation, to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love toward God ; and, on the contrary side, for curious and carnal persons lacking the spirit of Christ to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God's predestination is very dangerous.^l

* Text in Schaff, Hardwick and others.

^a West. Conf., III, 6.

^f West. Conf., III, 5, b.

^b West. Conf., III, 1, a.

^g West. Conf., III, 3, 5.

^c West. Conf., III, 1, b.

^h West. Conf., III, 6.

^d West. Conf., III, 3.

ⁱ West. Conf., III, 7.

^e West. Conf., III, 4.

^j West. Conf., III, 8.

^k West. Conf., III, 5, a.

(17). We must receive God's promises in such wise as they be generally set forth unto us in holy Scripture ; and in our doings that will of God is to be followed which we have expressly declared unto us in the Word of God.^x

WESTMINSTER CONFESION (1647).

III. *Of God's Eternal Decree.*

1. God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass : yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

2. Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions ; yet hath He not decreed anything because He foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.

3. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.

4. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed ; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

5. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of His mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving Him thereunto ; and all to the praise of His glorious grace.

6. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath He, by the eternal and most free purpose of His will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by His Spirit working in due season ; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.

7. The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of His own will, whereby He extendeth or withholdeth mercy as He pleaseth, for the glory of His sovereign power over His creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice.

8. The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in His Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election. So shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence and admiration of God ; and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation, to all that sincerely obey the Gospel.

WESTMINSTER LARGER CATECHISM (1647).

12. God's decrees are the wise, free, and holy acts of the counsel of His will, whereby, from all eternity, He hath, for His own glory, unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass in time, especially concerning angels and men.

13. God, by an eternal and immutable decree, out of His mere love, for the

^x West. Conf., III, 8.

praise of His glorious grace, to be manifested in due time, hath elected some angels to glory ; and in Christ hath chosen some men to eternal life, and the means thereof: and also, according to His sovereign power, and the unsearchable counsel of His own will (whereby He extendeth or withholdeth favor as He pleaseth), hath passed by, and foreordained the rest to dishonor and wrath, to be for their sin inflicted, to the praise of the glory of His justice.

14. God executeth His decrees in the works of creation and providence ; according to His infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of His own will.

WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM (1648).

7. The decrees of God are, His eternal purpose, according to the counsel of His will, whereby, for His own glory, He hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

20. God out of His mere good pleasure from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life.

CANONS OF DORT (1618–1619).*

First Head of Doctrine : Of Divine Predestination.

1. As all men have sinned in Adam, lie under the curse, and are obnoxious to eternal death, God would have done no injustice by leaving them all to perish, and delivering them over to condemnation on account of sin, according to the words of the Apostle (Rom. iii. 19), "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God"; (ver. 23) "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"; and (vi. 23) "for the wages of sin is death."

2. But "in this the love of God was manifested, that He sent His only begotten Son into the world," "that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (1 John iv. 9; John iii. 16).

3. And that men may be brought to believe, God mercifully sends the messengers of these most joyful tidings to whom He will, and at what time He pleaseth ; by whose ministry men are called to repentance and faith in Christ crucified. "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?" (Rom. x. 14, 15).

4. The wrath of God abideth upon those who believe not this gospel ; but such as receive it, and embrace Jesus the Saviour by a true and living faith, are by Him delivered from the wrath of God and from destruction, and have the gift of eternal life conferred upon them.

5. The cause or guilt of this unbelief, as well as of all other sins, is nowise in God, but in man himself: whereas faith in Jesus Christ, and salvation through Him is the free gift of God, as it is written, "By grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. ii. 8); and, "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him," etc. (Phil. i. 29).

6. That some receive the gift of faith from God, and others do not receive it, proceeds from God's eternal decree.* "For known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world" (Acts xv. 18; Eph. i. 11). According to which decree He graciously softens the hearts of the elect, however obstinate,

* This translation is that of the (Dutch) Reformed Church in America as given by Schaff, except in the "Rejection of Errors" which is from the Latin text given by Schaff.

* West. Conf., III, 3.

and inclines them to believe; while He leaves the non-elect in His just judgment to their own wickedness and obduracy.^b And herein is especially displayed the profound, the merciful, and at the same time the righteous discrimination between men, equally involved in ruin; or that decree of *election* and *reprobation*, revealed in the Word of God, which, though men of perverse, impure and unstable minds wrest it to their own destruction, yet to holy and pious souls affords unspeakable consolation.^c

7. Election is the unchangeable purpose of God, whereby, before the foundation of the world, He hath, out of mere grace, according to the sovereign good pleasure of His own will, chosen, from the whole human race, which had fallen through their own fault, from their primitive state of rectitude, into sin and destruction, a certain number of persons to redemption in Christ, whom He from eternity appointed the Mediator and head of the elect, and the foundation of salvation.^d

This elect number, though by nature neither better or more deserving than others, but with them involved in one common misery, God hath decreed to give to Christ to be saved by Him, and effectually to call and draw them to His communion by His Word and Spirit; to bestow upon them true faith, justification and sanctification; and having powerfully preserved them in the fellowship of His Son, finally to glorify them for the demonstration of His mercy, and for the praise of the riches of His glorious grace:^e as it is written, "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. i. 4-6). And elsewhere, "Whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. viii. 30).

8. There are not various decrees of election, but one and the same decree respecting all those who shall be saved both under the Old and New Testament; since the Scripture declares the good pleasure, purpose and counsel of the divine will to be one, according to which He hath chosen us from eternity, both to grace and to glory, to salvation and the way of salvation, which He hath ordained that we should walk therein.^f

9. This election was not founded upon foreseen faith, and the obedience of faith, holiness, or any other good quality or disposition in man, as the prerequisite cause or condition on which it depended; but men are chosen to faith and to the obedience of faith, holiness, etc.^g Therefore election is the fountain of every saving good; from which proceed faith, holiness and the other gifts of salvation, and finally eternal life itself, as its fruits and effects, according to that of the Apostle. "He hath chosen us [not because we were, but] that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love" (Eph. i. 4).^h

10. The good pleasure of God is the sole cause of this gracious election; which doth not consist herein that God, foreseeing all possible qualities of human actions, elected certain of these as a condition of salvation, but that He was pleased out of the common mass of sinners to adopt some certain persons as a peculiar people to Himself,ⁱ as it is written, "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil," etc., "it was said [namely, to Rebecca] the elder shall serve the younger; as it is written, Jacob have I

^b *West. Conf.*, III, 3, 5, 7.

^f *West. Conf.*, III, 6.

^c *West. Conf.*, III, 8.

^g *West. Conf.*, III, 5, b.

^d *West. Conf.*, III, 5, a.

^h *West. Conf.*, III, 6.

^e *West. Conf.*, III, 6.

ⁱ *West. Conf.*, III, 5, b.

loved, but Esau have I hated (Rom. ix. 11-13); and, "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts xiii. 48).

11. And as God himself is most wise, unchangeable, omniscient, and omnipotent, so the election made by Him can neither be interrupted nor changed, recalled nor annulled; neither can the elect be cast away, nor their number diminished.¹

12. The elect, in due time, though in various degrees and in different measures, attain the assurance of this their eternal and unchangeable election, not by inquisitively prying into the secret and deep things of God, but by observing in themselves, with a spiritual joy and holy pleasure, the infallible fruits of election pointed out in the Word of God; such as a true faith in Christ, filial fear, a godly sorrow for sin, a hungering and thirsting after righteousness, etc.²

13. The sense and certainty of this election afford to the children of God additional matter for daily humiliation before Him, for adoring the depth of His mercies, and rendering grateful returns of ardent love to Him who first manifested so great love toward them.³ The consideration of this doctrine of election is so far from encouraging remissness in the observance of the divine commands or from sinking men into carnal security, that these, in the just judgment of God, are the usual effects of rash presumption or of idle and wanton trifling with the grace of election, in those who refuse to walk in the ways of the elect.⁴

14. As the doctrine of divine election by the most wise counsel of God was declared by the Prophets, by Christ himself, and by the Apostles, and is clearly revealed in the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament, so it is still to be published in due time and place in the Church of God, for which it was peculiarly designed, provided it be done with reverence, in the spirit of discretion and piety, for the glory of God's most holy name, and for enlivening and comforting His people, without vainly attempting to investigate the secret ways of the Most High.⁵

15. What peculiarly tends to illustrate and recommend to us the eternal and unmerited grace of election is the express testimony of sacred Scripture, that not all, but some only, are elected, while others are passed by in the eternal decree; whom God, out of His sovereign, most just, irreprehensible and unchangeable good pleasure, hath decreed to leave in the common misery into which they have wilfully plunged themselves, and not to bestow upon them saving faith and the grace of conversion; but permitting them in His just judgment to follow their own way; at last, for the declaration of His justice, to condemn and punish them forever, not only on account of their unbelief, but also for all their other sins.⁶ And this is the decree of reprobation which by no means makes God the author of sin (the very thought of which is blasphemy)⁷, but declares Him to be an awful, irreprehensible and righteous judge and avenger.

16. Those who do not yet experience a lively faith in Christ, an assured confidence of soul, peace of conscience, an earnest endeavor after filial obedience, and glorying in God through Christ, efficaciously wrought in them, and do nevertheless persist in the use of the means which God hath appointed for working these graces in us, ought not to be alarmed at the mention of reprobation, nor to rank themselves among the reprobate, but diligently to persevere in the use of means, and with ardent desires devoutly and humbly to wait for a season of richer grace. Much less cause have they to be terrified by the doctrine of reprobation, who, though they seriously desire to be turned to God.

¹ *West. Conf.*, III, 4.

² *West. Conf.*, III, 8.

³ *West. Conf.*, III, 7.

⁴ *West. Conf.*, III, 1, b.

to please Him only, and to be delivered from the body of death, cannot yet reach that measure of holiness and faith to which they aspire; since a merciful God has promised that He will not quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed. But this doctrine is justly terrible to those who, regardless of God and the Saviour Jesus Christ, have wholly given themselves up to the cares of the world and the pleasures of the flesh, so long as they are not seriously converted to God.^m

17. Since we are to judge of the will of God from His Word, which testifies that the children of believers are holy, not by nature, but in virtue of the covenant of grace, in which they together with the parents are comprehended godly parents have no reason to doubt of the election and salvation of their children, whom it pleases God to call out of this life in their infancy.

18. To those who murmur at the free grace of election, and just severity of reprobation, we answer with the Apostle: "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" (Rom. ix. 20); and quote the language of our Saviour: "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" (Matt. xx. 15). And therefore with holy adoration of these mysteries, we exclaim in the words of the Apostle: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been His counsellor? or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen." (Rom. xi. 33-36).

Rejection of the Errors

By which the Belgian Churches have for some time been troubled. Having set forth the orthodox doctrine of Election and Reprobation, the Synod rejects the errors of those—

1. Who teach, "that the will of God concerning the salvation of those who shall believe and who shall persevere in faith and the obedience of faith, is the whole and entire decree of election to salvation, and that there is nothing else revealed in the Word of God concerning this decree." For these impose on the simple-minded, and manifestly contradict the Holy Scriptures, which testify that God not only wills to save those who shall believe, but also has from eternity chosen some designated individuals to whom in distinction from the rest He will in time give faith and perseverance; as it is written, "I manifested Thy name unto the men whom Thou gavest me" (John xvii. 6); again, "And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts xiii. 48); and, "He chose us before the foundations of the world were laid, that we should be holy," etc. (Eph. i. 4).ⁿ

2. Who teach, "That God's election to eternal life is various (multiplex); one general and indefinite, the other particular and definite; and the latter again either incomplete, revocable, non-peremptory, or conditioned, or else complete, irrevocable, peremptory, or absolute." Again, "That the one election is to faith, the other to salvation; so that the election to justifying faith can exist without a peremptory election to salvation." For this is a fancy of the human mind excogitated aside of the Scriptures, corrupting the doctrine of election and dissolving that golden chain of salvation: "Whom He did predestinate them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. viii. 30).^o

3. Who teach, "That the good pleasure and purpose of God, of which the Scriptures make mention in the doctrine of election, does not consist in this—

^mWest. Conf., III, 8.

ⁿWest. Conf., III, 5.

^oWest. Conf., III, 6.

That God has chosen certain particular individuals in distinction from others, but in this—That out of all possible conditions (among which are the works of the law), or out of the whole order of things, God has chosen the act of faith, ignoble though it be in itself, and the imperfect obedience of faith, to be the condition of salvation ; and has determined graciously to take it for perfect obedience and to account it worthy of the reward of eternal life.” For by this pernicious error the good pleasure of God and the merit of Christ are set aside, and men are called away from the verity of gratuitous justification and the simplicity of the Scriptures to useless questionings ; and the saying of the Apostle is falsified, “God called us with a holy calling ; not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal ” (2 Tim. i. 9).^p

4. Who teach, “That in the election to faith it is presupposed as a condition that a man shall rightly use the light of nature, that he shall be upright, child-like, humble, with a disposition to eternal life, seeing that election measurably depends on these things.” For they savor of Pelagius and openly charge the Apostle with falsehood when he writes : “We once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest : but God, being rich in mercy, for His great love where-with He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, quickened us together with Christ, by whose grace ye are saved, and raised us up with Him, and made us sit with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus : that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus : for by grace have ye been saved through faith (and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God), not of works that no man should glory ” (Eph. ii. 3-7).^q

5. Who teach, “That incomplete and non-peremptory election of particular persons to salvation takes place out of foreseen faith, repentance, holiness, and piety in its beginnings and in its earlier stages ; while complete and peremptory election is out of final perseverance in foreseen faith, repentance, holiness and piety : and that this is the gracious and evangelical worthiness, on account of which he who is elected is more worthy than he who is not elected ; and that accordingly faith, the obedience of faith, holiness, piety and perseverance are not the fruits or effects of an immutable election to glory, but conditions and indispensable causes, absolutely prerequisite in those to be elected, and foreseen as if actually present.” Because this is repugnant to the whole of Scripture, which continually presses upon our ears and hearts such sayings as these : “Election is not of works, but of Him that calleth ” (Rom. ix. 11); “As many as were ordained to eternal life believed ” (Acts xiii. 48); “He chose us in Himself that we might be holy ” (Eph. i. 4); “You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you ” (John xv. 16); “If of grace, it is no longer of works ” (Rom. xi. 6); “Herein is love, not that we have loved God, but that He has loved us and sent His Son ” (1 John iv. 10).^r

6. Who teach, “That it is not every election to salvation that is immutable, but, no decree of God standing in the way, some of the elect can perish and do eternally perish.” By which crass error, they alike make God mutable and subvert the consolation of the saints derived from the constancy of their election, and contradict the Holy Scriptures, which say : “It is not possible for the elect to be led astray ” (Matt. xxiv. 24); “Christ does not lose those given Him by the Father ” (John vi. 39); “God also glorifies those whom He has predestinated, called and justified ” (Rom. viii. 30).^s

7. Who teach, “That there is in this life no fruit, no sense, no certitude of

^p *West. Conf.*, III, 4, 5, 6.

^r *West. Conf.*, III, 4.

^q *West. Conf.*, III, 5.

immutable election except out of a mutable and contingent condition." For besides the absurdity of speaking of an uncertain certitude, the experience of the saints stands opposed to this; for they exult with the Apostle in the sense of their election, and celebrate this gift of God, rejoicing with the disciples according to Christ's admonition, that "their names are written in heaven" (Luke x. 20): and in fine oppose their sense of election to the fiery darts of diabolic temptations, asking "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" (Rom. viii. 33).^a

8. Who teach, "That God has not out of His mere will decreed to leave anyone in the fall of Adam and in the common state of sin and damnation, or to pass anyone by in the communication of the grace necessary for faith and conversion." For this declaration stands, "He hath mercy on whom He will; and whom He will he hardeneth" (Rom. ix. 18); and this, "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given" (Matt. xiii. 11); again, "I glorify Thee, Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding, and hast revealed them unto babes: yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight" (Matt. xi. 25-26).^b

9. Who teach, "That the reason why God sends the Gospel to this rather than to that nation, is not the mere and sole good pleasure of God but because the one nation is better and more worthy than the other to whom the Gospel is not communicated." For Moses contradicts, thus addressing the people of Israel: "Behold, unto the Lord thy God belongeth the heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that therein is; only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you, above all peoples, as at this day" (Deut. x. 14, 15); and Christ: "Woe to you Chorazin, woe to you Bethsaida, because if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which have been done in you, they would long ago have repented in sackcloth and ashes" (Matt. xi. 21).^c

Conclusion.

And this is the perspicuous, simple and ingenuous declaration of the orthodox doctrine and the rejection of the errors, with which the Belgic Churches have for some time been troubled. This doctrine the Synod judges to be drawn from the Word of God, and to be agreeable to the confession of the Reformed Churches. Whence it clearly appears that some, whom such conduct by no means became, have violated all truth, equity and charity, in wishing to persuade the public: "That the doctrine of the Reformed Churches concerning predestination, and the points annexed to it, by its own genius and necessary tendency, leads off the minds of men from all piety and religion;" that it is an opiate administered by the flesh and the devil;" and the stronghold of Satan where he lies in wait for all, and from which he wounds multitudes, and mortally strikes through many with the darts both of despair and security;" that it makes God the author of sin, unjust, tyrannical, hypocritical;" that it is nothing more than an interpolated Stoicism, Manicheism, Libertinism, Turcism;" that it renders men carnally secure, since they are persuaded by it that nothing can hinder the salvation of the elect, let them live as they please;" and therefore that they may safely perpetrate every species of the most atrocious crimes;" and that, if the reprobate should even perform truly all the works of the saints, their obedience would not in the least contribute to

^aWest. Conf., III, 8.

^wWest. Conf., III, 1, b.

^bWest. Conf., III, 3, 4, 7.

^xWest. Conf., III, 1, b.

^aWest. Conf., III, 5, 6, 7.

^yWest. Conf., III, 8.

^vWest. Conf., III, 8.

their salvation ; that the same doctrine teaches that God, by a mere arbitrary act of His will, without the least respect or view to any sin, has predestinated the greatest part of the world to eternal damnation, and has created them for this very purpose : that in the same manner in which election is the fountain and cause of faith and good works, reprobation is the cause of unbelief and impiety ; that many children of the faithful are torn, guiltless, from their mothers' breasts and tyrannically plunged into hell : so that neither baptism nor the prayers of the Church at their baptism can at all profit them ;" and many other things of the same kind which the Reformed Churches not only do not acknowledge, but even detest with their whole soul.

FORMULA CONSENSUS HELVETICA (1675).*

IV. God, before the foundations of the world were laid, formed in Christ Jesus, our Lord, $\pi\rho\theta\epsilon\sigma\tau\alpha\iota\omega\nu\sigma$, an eternal purpose (Eph. iii. 11), in which, from the mere good pleasure of His will, without any foresight of the merit of works or of faith,^a to the praise of His glorious grace He elected a certain and definite number^b of men lying in the same mass of corruption and in common blood and therefore corrupted by sin, to be led in time to salvation by Christ, the sole surety and mediator, and through His merit, by the mighty power of the regenerating Holy Spirit, to be called efficaciously, regenerated and gifted with faith and repentance.^c And thus, determining to illustrate His glory, God decreed, first, to create man perfect, then to permit his fall, and finally to have mercy on some from the fallen, and therefore to elect these, but to leave the rest in the corrupt mass and finally to devote them to eternal destruction.^c

V. Moreover, in that gracious decree of divine election Christ Himself also is included, not as the meritorious cause or the foundation preceding election itself, but as Himself also foreknown before the foundations of the world were laid as $\epsilon\kappa\lambda\epsilon\kappa\tau\beta\zeta$, elect (1 Pet. ii. 4, 6), and therefore primarily the chosen mediator for its execution and our first-born brother, whose precious merit God willed to use for conferring on us salvation with the preservation of His justice. For the Holy Scriptures not only testify that election was made according to the mere good pleasure of the divine counsel and will (Matt. xi. 26; Eph. i. 5, 9); but also derive the destination and gift of Christ, our Mediator, from the zealous love of God the Father to the world of the elect.^d

VI. Wherefore we cannot give our suffrages to the opinion of those who teach that God, moved by $\phi\lambda\alpha\tau\theta\rho\omega\pi\alpha$, or a sort of peculiar love for the lapsed human race, to a "previous election," intended by a certain conditioned will, velleity or first mercy, the salvation of all and each, on a condition certainly, namely that they believe ; appointed Christ as mediator for all and each of the lapsed ; and finally elected some, considered not simply as sinners in the first Adam but as redeemed in the second Adam—that is appointed that the saving gift of faith should be bestowed upon them in time ;^e and that in this latter act alone "election properly so called" is completed. For these and all similar things, are no ordinary deflections from the $\iota\pi\sigma\tau\pi\pi\omega\sigma\iota$ of sound words concerning divine election. The Scriptures certainly restrict the purpose of God to show mercy to men—not assuredly to all and each—but to the elect alone ;^e with the exclusion of the reprobate by name^f—as in the case of Esau whom God pur-

* From the text in Niemeyer, with the aid of the E. T. given by A. A. Hodge, in his *Outlines of Theology*, appendix.

^aWest. Conf., III, 5, b.

^dWest. Conf., III, 6.

^bWest. Conf., III, 4.

^eWest. Conf., III, 6, b.

^cWest. Conf., III, 6.

sued with an eternal hatred (Rom. ix. 11). The same Holy Scriptures bear witness that the counsel and will of God do not change, but stand immovably and that God in the heavens does what he wishes (Is. xlvi. 10; Ps. cxv. 3).¹ Assuredly God is far removed from all human imperfection such as manifests itself in ineffectual affections and desires, rashness, repentance and change of counsel.² The appointment also of Christ as mediator proceeds from one and the same election, equally with the salvation of those that were given to Him for a possession and an *ἀναφέρετος* inheritance, and does not underlie it as its basis. . . .

XIII. As Christ was elected from eternity as the Head, Prince and Owner of all those who are saved in time by His grace: so also was He made in time the Surety of the New Covenant for those only who were given to Him by eternal election as a people of possession, His seed and inheritance.³ Certainly it was for the elect alone that by the determinate counsel of the Father and His own intention He encountered a dreadful death, these only that He restored to the bosom of the paternal grace, these only that He reconciled to the offended God the Father, and freed from the curse of the law.⁴ For our Jesus saves His people from sins (Matt. i. 21), giving His life as the redemption price for His many sheep (Matt. xx. 24, 28; cf. John x. 15), who listen to His voice (John x. 27, 28), and for these alone also, as a divinely called priest, does He intercede, the world being set aside (John xvii. 9; Is. lxvi. 22). Accordingly in the death of Christ the elect only, who in time are made new creatures, and for whom He was substituted in His death as a peculiar victim, are regarded as having died with Him, and as justified from sin (Matt. v. 17);⁵ and the will of Christ who dies so *παναρμονικῶς* agrees and amicably conspires with the counsel of the Father, who gives none others but the elect to be redeemed by Him, as well as with the operation of the Holy Spirit who sanctifies and seals to a vital hope of eternal life none others but the elect, that the equal *περιφορία* of the Father's electing, the Son's redeeming and the Holy Spirit's sanctifying is manifest.⁶

III.

We cannot allow ourselves space to draw out in detail the harmony of the Reformed creeds in their doctrine of predestination; or even to exhibit with any fullness the combined faithfulness and discretion which characterizes them in dealing with this high mystery, which their authors felt to lie at the root of their whole system of faith, as of the whole course of the Divine activities. He who will read over the series of documents, however cursorily, cannot fail to observe these things for himself. We permit ourselves, in concluding, only a few summary remarks.

1. We observe, then, that the *fact* of Absolute Predestination is the common presupposition of the whole body of Reformed creeds. There are a very few of them, to be sure, chiefly early brief declarations of the primary Protestant program, which lack direct allusion to it. These are such as the Sixty-seven Articles of Zurich (1523), the Ten Bernese Theses (1528), the Tetrapolitan Confession (1530), the First Helvetic (1536) and First

¹West. Conf., III, 4.

²West. Conf., III, 6, b.

Bohemian (1535) and the Polish or Sendomir (1570) Confessions. Even in their cases, however, the fact of predestination is often felt to lie very close in the background (as, for example, in the instances of the Sixty-seven Articles—of which the Bernese Theses are little more than an excerpt—and the Tetrapolitan Confession): and the omission of mention of it is always apparently the result of the special nature and purpose of the formulary. There are certain others of the Reformed Confessions in which predestination is adverted to, as it were, only incidentally—no separate paragraph being consecrated to its statement and formal development. This is the case with such documents as Zwingli's *Fidei Ratio* (1530) and *Expositio Christianæ Fidei* (1536), the Genevan Catechism (1545), the Consensus Tigurinus (1549), the short creeds prepared by Calvin for the Students of Geneva (1559), the Church of Paris (1557) and the French Churches (1562), as well as the Confession of the English Exiles in Geneva (1558) and the Heidelberg Catechism (1563), to which may be added the Second Bohemian Confession (1575). The circumstance that the majority of these formularies come directly from the hand of Zwingli or Calvin himself, while the Confession of the English Exiles was written by Knox, and the Heidelberg Catechism reflects the teachings of Calvin's pupil and defender, Ursinus, already makes it clear that the lack in them of a separate treatment of predestination is due to no underestimation of the doctrine itself. This is further borne out by the circumstance that the doctrine, though adverted to only incidentally, is dealt with in these formularies with firmness and clearness and altogether in the spirit of the most advanced Reformed teaching. It seems only an accident of their form, therefore, to be explained ordinarily* from the practical end held in view in their composition, leading to emphasis being laid especially on the subjective side of religious truth, that a more formal treatment of predestination was not given in these formularies also. The separation off of the topic for distinct formal assertion and treatment is found first in the First Basle or Mühlhausen Confession (1534), after which the Genevan Confession of 1537 soon follows; in the more elaborate later Confessions it is regular.

It is worth noting, however, that, in accordance with the prevailing soteriological interest in which the Confessions were composed, the treatment of General Predestination or the Decree of God is much less usual and full than that of Special Predestination or Election and Reprobation. Not rarely allusion to it fails altogether, and when it is adverted to its adduction is often

* In the case of the Zurich Consent (1549), of course, its scope did not allow more than an incidental allusion.

purely incidental, in connection, say, with the doctrine of Providence: as a rule it is only in the more developed and extended creeds that it is set forth explicitly or with any fullness. The Westminster Shorter Catechism is perhaps unique in giving the preference to a statement of General Predestination (8) and stating Special Predestination only incidentally (20). How General Predestination is commonly dealt with may be observed by noting its treatment in Zwingli's *Fidei Ratio* (1530), the Hungarian Confession (1557), the Second Helvetic Confession (1562), the Heidelberg Catechism (1563), Sigismund's Confession (1614); and among the Calvinian creeds, especially of course in the Genevan Consent, which devotes a long separate discussion to Providence (1552), but along with it also Calvin's Articles (15—), the Genevan Students' Confession (1559), the Confession of the English Exiles (1558), the Gallican Confession (1559), and the Belgic (1561) and the Scotch Confessions (1560), and especially the Irish Articles (1615), from which the Westminster Confession directly derives. It will be observed, in glancing over the treatment in these documents, that, on the one side, especial care is taken to guard against the supposition that God, by virtue of His universal decree, is therefore chargeable with the authorship of or moral responsibility for sin; and, on the other, the strongest stress is laid upon the confidence which the child of God may cherish in all the untoward circumstances of life that everything that occurs is yet but the outworking of a Father's purpose and will always conduce to good to those who are His. Even in dealing with God's General Predestination, therefore, though before all, of course, the motive is to do justice to the very idea of God as the Personal Author and Governor of all, and to the Scriptural revelation concerning the universal reach of His purpose, yet the practical interests of the ethical construction of sin and of the comfort of the saints largely condition and control the presentation of the doctrine. Thus it happens that the fact of General Predestination is commonly presupposed or incidentally alluded to rather than the doctrine fully expounded.

2. It is to be observed, next, that the whole body of these Confessions are remarkably at one in their doctrine as to the *nature* of Predestination. Little space is occupied, it is true, with guarding the doctrine of General Predestinatoin from the perversion of either the coarse suspension of it on foresight or the more subtle entanglement of it with a *scientia media*—though Zwingli's *Fidei Ratio* (1530) already strikes a clear note here. As General Predestination is itself largely dealt with only by presupposition and allusion, so are naturally all questions concerning its nature.

With reference to Special or Soteriological Predestination, however, the case is different. Its absoluteness and independence of all foreseen grounds or conditions are copiously and emphatically asserted ; the matter is treated not only positively but negatively ; every conceivable ground in the creature for the decree is mentioned in detail and expressly excluded. There is no variation in this matter from Zwingli to the Swiss Form of Consent. To all alike the Divine Predestination as applied to the destiny of man is an eternal, absolute, independent, most free, immutable purpose of God, for which no cause can be assigned except His gratuitous good pleasure ; and in which no change can be imagined, just because it is the purpose of the immutable God. Therefore these Confessions are also at one in proclaiming the particularity of the election of God. According to them all, it deals, not with a variable class, but with specific individuals which are particularly and unchangeably designed. This is the clear assertion not only of what may be looked upon as the stricter Calvinistic formularies, but also of those which were laboring most heavily in the Unionistic currents. It is not merely the Swiss Form of Consent which declares that God "elected a certain and definite number," or the Lambeth and Irish Articles and Canons of Dort which assert that predestination has predefined a certain number, known only to God indeed, but capable neither of increase nor diminution: the Second Helvetic Confession (1562) also with equal conviction affirms that God knows who are His ; the theologians at the Leipzig Colloquy insist that both the number and names of His elect are known to God ; the authors of the Declaration of Thorn assert that the number of the elect is certain with God.

Nor is there any difference among these Confessions in their conception of election as in its very nature—as indeed it is *ex vi termini*—an act specifically of *discrimination*. To one and all alike the elect are a body of individuals, particularly and individually set upon by the inscrutable love of God, and by this act of free and independent choice separated from others who are thus passed by in the electing grace, and accordingly left unchosen, unelected, and therefore unblessed by the series of acts of divine grace which follow upon election and give it effect. In other words, for all these creeds alike *discrimination* constitutes the very essence of Soteriological Predestination. That is to say, it is a *prædestinatio gemina* that they teach : and that again is to say that they are at one in the conception of the necessary implication in the sovereignty of election, of a sovereign preterition as well.

It is true enough, no doubt, that they do not all explicitly define the doctrine of sovereign preterition. We have seen that there

are some of them which do not give more than a merely incidental treatment or even a mere reference to predestination at large ; and others even which do not directly allude to it at all : while yet it is clear that the doctrine of predestination is a fundamental postulate of them all. Similarly, among those in which predestination is alluded to or even somewhat fully set forth, there are some which do not allude to its darker side of reprobation, or, if they allude to it, pass it by with a mere allusion. There is, for example, no explicit reference to reprobation in the following Confessions, to wit : Zwingli's Exposition of the Christian Faith (1536), the First Basle Confession (1530), the Genevan Catechism (1545), Calvin's creeds composed for the Genevan Students (1559), the Church at Paris (1557) and the French Churches (1562), the English Articles (1553), the Heidelberg Catechism (1563), and the Second Bohemian Confession (1570). It will be noted at once that some of these come from the hand of Zwingli or Calvin himself, neither of whom certainly had any desire to minimize the importance of conceiving predestination as distinctively an act of discrimination ; and further, that in no one of them is election itself treated otherwise than by incidental allusion, except in the English Articles (1553) and the First Basle Confession (1530)—in the latter of which a single sentence only is given to it. Clearly the omission of allusion to reprobation is not to be interpreted in such instances as arguing any chariness as to the doctrine : it may rather be supposed to be omitted just because it is so fully presupposed. To these creeds are to be added certain others in which reprobation, though alluded to, receives no direct treatment, and is thus, while clearly presupposed, yet left without definition and guarding. These are Zwingli's *Fidei Ratio* (1530), the Scotch Confession (1560), and the Second Helvetic Confession (1562). These belong, with respect to the doctrine of reprobation, in a class similar to that occupied with reference to the general doctrine of predestination by the creeds which allude to it without expounding it : and it is to be noted that the authors of these creeds—Zwingli, Knox and Bullinger, in his later years when under the influence of Peter Martyr—cannot be suspected of any hesitation concerning the truth or importance of the *prædestinationis gemina*. Obviously the omission fully to define it is to be sought in these cases, therefore, not in doubt as to the doctrine, much less in denial of it, but, on the one hand, in such confidence in the implication of preterition in the very idea of election as seemed to render its separate statement unnecessary, and, on the other, in such engrossment with the practical aspects of the gracious side of the doctrine as led to passing lightly over all that is not immediately utilizable by the simplest Christian consciousness.

There is, therefore, a grave overstatement involved in, for example, Dr. Schaff's representation that "the Thirty-nine Articles, the Heidelberg Catechism, and other German Reformed Confessions indorse merely the positive part of the free election of believers, and are wisely silent concerning the decree of reprobation, leaving it to theological science and private opinion :”* and much more in the heightened form which he gives this representation later,† when he says that “the most authoritative” of the Reformed Creeds, “as the Helvetic Confession of Bullinger, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Brandenburg Confessions (also the Scotch Confession of 1560) teach only the positive and comforting part of predestination, and ignore or deny a separate decree of reprobation; thus taking the ground practically that all that are saved are saved by the free grace of God, while all that are lost are lost by their own guilt.” Of denial of the doctrine there can be no question here: it was certainly not denied by the authors of the documents which omit to mention it or mention it only allusively; men such as Zwingli, Calvin, Knox, Ursinus, Bullinger (at the close of his life) not only held but strenuously defended it. Of “ignoring” it, in any proper sense of that word, there can be no more question. Only in the case of the Brandenburg Confessions (which are assuredly as far as possible from ignoring it) can we speak even of an attempt to soften the statement of the doctrine: and the attempt in that case proceeded only by focussing attention on “positive reprobation” (concerning which some things are denied which no one of the Reformed wished to affirm of it) and withdrawing it from “negative reprobation” (of which some of the things denied of “positive reprobation” are affirmed by the Reformed system)—with the effect of betraying to the informed reader a wish to distract attention from controverted points rather than to deny any item of the Reformed faith. It is plausible only with reference to the English Articles to talk of a purposed ignoring: and even there doubtless only plausible. The broad fact is simply that the doctrine of reprobation fails to receive explicit treatment in a few of the Reformed creeds, just as predestination itself does; and that this simple omission to treat it is best explicable in the one case as in the other from the scope and special object of the creeds in question, and from the confidence of their writers in the necessary implication of the omitted doctrine in what is said. Similarly it is left unnoted in the Westminster Shorter Catechism, after the most explicit insistence on it in the Confession of Faith and the Larger

* *Creeds of Christendom*, I, 454.

† P. 635.

Catechism—for no other reason, of course, than the different specific objects and audiences held in view in the several cases.

Certainly reprobation is treated as an essential part of the doctrine of predestination in all the Reformed creeds in which it is dealt with at all. These include not merely certain of Calvin's own compositions—the Genevan Confession (1537), the Genevan Consensus (1552), Calvin's Articles (15—), the Gallican Confession (1559); and certain others that may be thought to derive in a special way from him—the Confession of the English Exiles (1558), the Belgic Confession (1553), the Lambeth (1595) and Irish Articles (1615), the Canons of Dort (1618) and the Swiss Form of Consent (1575); but even such creeds as the Hungarian (1557) and the Brandenburg Confessions, Sigismund's (1614), the Leipzig Colloquy (1631) and the Declaration of Thorn (1645) which, with all their effort to soften the expression of the doctrine in its harder-looking features, do not dream of denying, ignoring or doubting that it is, as the obverse of election, an essential element of the doctrine of predestination. In all these documents reprobation is treated as involved in the very definition of predestination as a soteriological decree, or in the doctrine of "election" itself as a selection out of a mass. It is not treated with equal detail, however, in them all. It is especially to the Genevan Confession (1537), the Genevan Consensus (1552), the Articles of Calvin (15—), the Gallican and Belgic Confessions (1559 and 1561), the Lambeth and Irish Articles (1595 and 1615), the Westminster Confession (1646), the Canons of Dort (1618) and the Swiss Form of Consent (1675)—together with the softened Brandenburg Confessions—that we must go to find its full exposition. There is, nevertheless, no reason, and indeed no room, to fancy that those documents which speak less fully of the doctrine, or do not even allude to it, occupy any other attitude towards it than the common Reformed attitude, revealed in the Confessions in which it is explicitly mentioned or fully developed. It is rather to be presumed that the common doctrine is presupposed when it does not come to explicit mention: and every indication in the creeds themselves bears this presumption out.

This constancy of the testimony of the Reformed Confessions to the *prædestinatio gemina*—that is, to the reality of a sovereign preterition by the side of and forming the foil of sovereign election—may well seem to be remarkable in the face of the universal condemnation it provoked from the controversialists of other communions. From the publication of the Form of Concord the confessional Lutheran doctrine involved the denial of a predestination to death: and Lutheran controversialists were not backward in

assaulting the Reformed doctrine as in its very essence horrible. In Anglican circles, along another pathway, essentially the same result was reached: and even the best of the adherents of the new Anglicanism adopted as their own Hooker's construction of an absolute will in God for salvation but "an occasioned will" for destruction, and made it the reproach of Calvinists that they taught "one irrespective predestination" to death as to life. No doubt individual theologians were more or less affected by the very iteration and violence of these assaults; and there arose inevitably Lutherizers and Anglicanizers among the teachers of the Reformed Churches. The peculiarities of the Brandenburg Confessions, for example, no doubt find their explanation in the sharpness of the conflict on German ground. But doubtless the explanation of the constancy of the Reformed testimony to the *prædestinatio gemina* is also in part to be traced to the very sharpness of this conflict. The denial of sovereign preterition was thereby clearly branded as a Lutheran error or as quasi-Augustinian Anglicanism. For the preservation of the Reformed doctrine its affirmation was clearly exhibited to be essential. Thus it became more and more impossible to omit it; and after the rise of the Remonstrant controversy, quite impossible. It was therefore that even the Brandenburg Confessions assert reprobation as an integral part of the doctrine of predestination, and only strive to save appearances by obscuring the distinction between negative and positive reprobation and making denials with reference to "reprobation" which apply only to the former. It was therefore, also, that in the effort to save the Calvinism of the British Churches, the *prædestinatio bipartita* was thrown up into high relief in the Lambeth and Irish Articles and the Westminster formularies. Hard experience had made Calvin's judgment, that without preterition election itself cannot stand, the deep conviction of the whole Reformed Church: and whether at Dort or Zurich, London or Dublin, the essence of the Calvinistic contention was found in the free *discrimination* among men which was attributed to God: in the confession that He chooses not all but some men to life and destines the rest, therefore, to destruction. The Confession of the English Exiles at Geneva (1558) is unique in stating this act of discrimination so as to throw the predestination to death in the foreground: "God of the lost sons of Adam hath ordained some as vessels of wrath to damnation; and hath chosen others as vessels of His mercy to be saved." But this is indicatory only of the clearness with which *discrimination* was grasped as the core of the matter. The rest follow the opposite and more natural form of statement, but are no less intent on tracing to God the actual distinction in

destiny which Scripture and observation alike forced on the recognition of every thoughtful student whether of the Book or of mankind.

3. We must not fail next to observe in passing, though we shall not dwell upon it, the unanimity of these Confessions in construing the decree of God *as a unit*; that is to say, in recognizing the election to salvation as involving a predestination of all the means thereof, and correspondingly the act of preterition as involving the foreordination of all that is consequent thereto. Sometimes the unity of the decree is asserted in so many words; it is affirmed that it was in the “same decree” by which men were segregated to salvation that the means by which they should be made partakers of this salvation were ordained for them. At other times the matter is treated only by enunciating the natural sequence of things; ordination to an end implying ordination of the means to that end. But without exception the destination of men to salvation and the destination to them of the means thereto are treated as inseparably united.

4. It is, however, of more immediate interest to observe the attitude of the Reformed Confessions with respect to the *object* of Predestination. Here we are met by a greater apparent diversity than obtains in the other matters that have attracted our attention. Of the three great parties that grew up among the Reformed with reference to the object of predestination (in the sense of Soteriological Predestination)—the Supralapsarian, Infralapsarian and Salmurian, conceiving the object of predestination respectively as unfallen, fallen and redeemed mankind—the first and third receive no support from the Confessions. Yet all the Confessions are not Infralapsarian: nor is their attitude precisely the same towards Supralapsarianism and Salmurianism. Some of them are explicitly Infralapsarian, and none exclude, much less polemically oppose, Infralapsarianism. None of them are explicitly Supralapsarian: many, however, leave the question between Supra- and Infralapsarianism entirely to one side, and thus open the way equally to both; and none are polemically directed against Supralapsarianism. Not only are none explicitly Salmurian, on the other hand, but those prepared after the rise of Salmurianism firmly close the door to it, while earlier ones certainly do not open it, and leave room for it, if at all, only uncertainly and by doubtful inference from chance expressions which have no direct reference to the point in controversy and are flexible to other constructions.

The explicitly Infralapsarian Confessions include the Genevan Consent (1552), the Hungarian Confession (1557), that of the

English Exiles at Geneva (1558), the Gallican (1559) and Belgic (1561) Confessions, the Canons of Dort (1618) and the Swiss Form of Consent (1675), together with the Articles framed at the Leipzig Colloquy (1631). These explicitly declare that the discrimination which God made among men was made *in massa corrupta*: it is for them certain that it was out of the lost race of man that God chose some to eternal life, leaving the rest to the just recompense of their sins. By their side we may perhaps place some others, such as the Genevan Confession of 1537 and the creeds prepared by Calvin for the Genevan Students (1559), the Church at Paris (1557) and the French Churches (1562), the Confession of Sigismund (1614) and the Declaration of Thorn (1645), and perhaps also, though with less confidence, the Second Helvetic Confession (1662) and the Heidelberg Catechism (1563), as Confessions which, while not clearly implying Infralapsarianism, yet seem more or less to speak out of an underlying but not expressed Infralapsarian consciousness: this is, however, a matter of mere tone and manner, and is of course much too subtle to insist upon. In such formulae, on the other hand, as Zwingli's *Fidei Ratio* (1530), the First Basle or Mühlhausen Confession (1534), the Genevan Catechism (1545), the Zurich Consent (1549), the English (1553), Lambeth (1595) and Irish (1615) Articles and the Scotch Confession (1560), the lines are so drawn that it is impossible to discover that there is advantage given to either party to the debate over the other: in the case of the Westminster Confession, which shares this peculiarity with them, we know that this was the result of a settled policy, and it may have been the same in some of the others also (as in Calvin's Articles, in view of Beza's views known to him, and in the Lambeth and Irish Articles). In view of these facts, it is hardly possible to speak of the Reformed creeds at large as distinctly Infralapsarian, though Dr. Schaff's language affirming that "all the Reformed Confessions . . . keep within the limits of Infralapsarianism"** may, so far, be adopted as well-chosen and expressive of the true state of the case. Some Reformed Confessions explicitly define Infralapsarianism: none assert anything which is not consonant with Infralapsarianism. On the other hand, nothing is affirmed in the majority of the Confessions inconsistent with Supralapsarianism either; and this majority includes several of the most widely accepted documents. The Westminster Confession in its careful avoidance of raising the distinction throws itself, therefore, into a class with the majority of its companion Confessions, inclusive of the Heidel-

* As cited, p. 635: "Even," he specifies, "the Canons of Dort, the Westminster Confession, and the Helvetic Consensus Formula."

berg Catechism and the Second Helvetic Confession, which are certainly the most widely accepted of Continental formularies, and of the entire British tradition. It is a noteworthy fact that it is particularly the Genevan creeds and those formed under the Genevan influence which are explicitly Infralapsarian; while it is along the line of German Reformed and British influence that the distinction is avoided, or at least not adverted to. This is probably in part due to the prosecution of the debate between the parties, with most vigor among the French-speaking Calvinists and in Holland. But the effect is to throw the Westminster Confession at this point into companionship with the documents which have been often treated as presenting the "milder" Calvinism, but which would certainly be more properly described as at this point setting forth rather a more generic Calvinism. It is certainly a remarkable instance of the irresponsibility of polemics to hear, as we have recently been forced often to hear, adduced as a mark of hyper-Calvinism a feature of the Westminster method of dealing with predestination which it shares with the Second Helvetic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism, the Confession of Sigismund and the Declaration of Thorn, the Thirty-nine Articles and the early Scotch Confession.

We restrain ourselves, however, from entering here into a comparison of the Westminster Confession with its sister documents and illustrating from them its especial type of Calvinistic teaching. It has been, to be sure, one of the chief ends we have had in view, in calling attention just at this time to the doctrine of Predestination as expressed in the Reformed creeds, to further an intelligent estimate of the teaching of the Westminster Standards on this great topic, by throwing upon it the light of its historical enunciation in the Reformed Churches. But we must rest content for the present with the general results that the whole body of Reformed creeds, including the Westminster Standards, are remarkably at one in their conceptions of this high mystery; and that the Westminster Standards in their exposition of its elements receive the support of the entire body of the Reformed creeds at every salient point. To facilitate a rough estimate of the nature and amount of the support it thus receives from them, we have marked by footnote references to the Westminster Confession the passages in them which present especially close parallels with the sections in the chapter in that formulary which deals with the decree of God. Later, we hope to return to the matter. For the present it may safely be left to the general impression which the mere reading over of the documents will inevitably make.

**IN COMPLIANCE WITH CURRENT
COPYRIGHT LAW
OCKER & TRAPP INC.
AND
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL
PRODUCED THIS REPLACEMENT VOLUME
ON WEYERHAEUSER COUGAR OPAQUE NATURAL PAPER,
THAT MEETS ANSI/NISO STANDARDS Z39.48-1992
TO REPLACE THE IRREPARABLY
DETERIORATED ORIGINAL. 1999**

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 01116 7527

